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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A GENTLE SHEPHERD.]

SINNED AGAINST: NOT SINNING.

CHAPTER XV.

"Does my old friend remember me?"
TENNISON.

"BARBARA," said Henry Garthside, as his cousin entered the room, bearing with her a sweet, subtle odour of dried lavender and rose-leaves from the linen chest, "Muriel Oliphant has something to tell me of her past life since she left us, and she wishes you to be present at the telling of it."

"Just as you like," replied Barbara. "I am not an old friend of yours," she continued, addressing Muriel, "but I have heard of you so very often that I almost look upon you as such, and I am glad you seem to consider me one, and to admit me into your confidence."

"Thank you very much," said Muriel, with some emotion, the tears coming into her eyes at the tone of hearty sympathy in Barbara Finlay's honest voice.

Barbara seated herself at her little work-table, and seemed to busy herself about some homely work.

Muriel wiped the tears from her sunken eyes, and said:

"First of all, Henry Garthside"—and as she spoke she held out her left hand—"although now I have no wedding-ring on my finger, yet I am a wedded wife."

"Heaven be praised!" fervently ejaculated the hunchback.

"And my lawful husband," she continued, "is Sir Percival Rossmore."

"No!" ejaculated Barbara, in no little surprise, letting her work fall upon her lap. "Sir Percival Rossmore?"

"Yes," asseverated Muriel, whilst Henry Garthside bent his head and made no remark. "I am the wedded wife of Sir Percival Rossmore."

"Tell us about it, Muriel," said Henry Garthside, without looking at her.

"It happened in this way," Muriel continued.

"Sir Percival used often to come into the school-house when my father was alive, and used to talk to me. And then, when my father died, Sir Percival said that if I would only go away with him to London he would marry me and make a fine lady of me."

"Why did you not trust your old friends, Muriel, and tell them of it?" said Henry Garthside, with a reproachful tone in his voice. "It was scarcely kind of you not to have done so, for there were many stories afloat concerning you, which it would have been a very great comfort to have been able to have satisfactorily refuted."

"Yes," she replied, regretfully, "I suppose I ought to have done so, but I was young and vain and foolish, and, I daresay, selfish. You see, I had no relatives, no one in the world belonging to me when I lost my father, and I did not give any thought to friends or to what they might think."

"I am afraid not, Muriel."

"No," she continued, "I know I did not. I thought too much about going away to London, and having a carriage to ride in and wearing fine dresses and jewels. I thought far more

about all these things than I did about what anyone here thought of my going away."

"But you were married to Sir Percival?" interposed Barbara.

"Yes," replied Muriel, "I am married to him. Would to Heaven I were not!"

"Surely," exclaimed Henry Garthside, his delicate, nervous face flushing painfully, as he clasped and unclasped his long, sinewy hands, which clutched the arms of his chair, "surely, Muriel," he repeated, "he did not ill-treat you?"

"You shall hear. But first give me a glass of water. I am weak—oh! so weak—and my strength has been failing curiously of late."

Barbara fetched the water, and put it to the lips of the half-fainting woman, who drank it down thirstily.

"When I left home," continued Muriel, "I went at Sir Percival Rossmore's request to a place called Brentwood, in Leamshire. You know he was not Sir Percival at the time, and he told me the old story: that he was afraid of offending his uncle, but that if I would consent to keep the affair quiet for awhile that the matter would soon be all right. Of course, like any other woman similarly circumstanced, I consented to whatever he proposed. After staying at Brentwood for a short time we went abroad, where my baby was born."

"Is it alive?" breathlessly asked Henry Garthside.

"Heaven knows! I do not," she replied. "But let me continue my story."

"My baby was born in Paris," she continued, "and after that I was very ill. Then came the news that old Sir Percival Rossmore was dead, and that my husband had succeeded to the title

and estates. I thought that now he would surely avow our marriage, and I urged him to do so, less almost for my own sake than for the sake of the child. He promised to see about the matter and arrange it all as soon as he returned from England, and with that parting assurance he left me."

Here she paused, exhausted by her emotion, and also by the effort of speaking.

After a brief interval of rest she thus continued:

"The weeks wore on, and at length three weeks passed, and I had received no communication of any kind from my husband. Somehow or other it occurred to me that there must be something wrong, therefore, before all my money was spent, I set out from Paris, and arrived one day at my husband's town house. It was late in the evening when I drove up to the door. Upon its being opened I walked past the servants and into the dining-room, whence I had heard the sound of mirth proceeding. Oh, my heart! my heart!" she suddenly exclaimed, clasping her hands upon her chest.

She lay back in her chair, again almost fainting.

Homely restoratives were applied, and she continued her story.

"I opened the door," Muriel continued, "and entered the room. The table was laden with choice fruit and flowers, delicate-tinted glass and china, whilst sparkling wines were there in abundance. Gorgeously-dressed women and gay-looking men composed the company, the gayest member of which was my own husband."

"Did he acknowledge you?" inquired Barbara, who had been listening with the most intense interest.

"No!" she exclaimed. "He then and there denied that I was his lawful wedded wife!"

"But had you not the proof of the register of the place where you were married?" said Henry Garthside.

"How does it happen, though," inquired Barbara Finlay, "that you did not sooner assert your rights?"

"I shall answer your question first, Henry," replied Muriel. "I did not make any inquiries at Brentwood then, because Sir Percival cruelly assured me that the marriage was irregular, and that I was not his wife. I was too ill and too frightened to do anything, and I implicitly believed him."

"But why did you not try and do something towards gaining redress?" reiterated the energetic Barbara.

"I could not. I became very ill—my child was taken from me, and when I awoke to consciousness I found myself an inmate of a private lunatic asylum."

"Great heavens! Can such things be in a Christian land!" ejaculated Henry Garthside, starting up and walking excitedly to and fro.

"Yes, Henry, and all these years, until one week ago, have I been an inmate of the asylum."

"And how did you get away from the place?" Barbara Finlay asked, in breathless amazement.

"Through the collusion of an attendant there. You must not ask me her name at present. Suffice to say that, won by the woman's kind-heartedness, I told her my story. By a strange coincidence, she chanced to know all about Sir Percival; she heard from her friends that he was going to marry again, and she helped me to escape. And now, my good friends, my presence here must be a secret for the present. Will you promise me that?"

"There is my hand on it, Muriel," said Henry Garthside.

"And mine," said Barbara Finlay, energetically. "You are as sane a woman as I am, and whilst you remain under this roof you are safe."

CHAPTER XVI.

She loves with love that cannot tire.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

The game which Ulrica Warner had set her-

self to play was a hazardous and desperate one, but having once thrown the dice she prepared to stake all upon the issue of the stake.

She loved Leopold Ormiston with such a wild, unreasoning love—with such a strange mixture of devotion and animal passion—that she was ready to risk everything for the mere sake of calling him hers, even for ever so brief a season.

Ulrica felt he did not care for her. She knew she was as nothing to him, and the knowledge goaded her, especially when she recollected Leopold Ormiston's loving words towards Everil Vane.

Ulrica laughed softly to herself as she sat in the rose-grown porch engaged with her many-hued crewel-work a couple of evenings after the confession of Muriel, recorded in the last chapter.

She was intensely amused at the way in which she had so cleverly simulated sudden faintness upon that day when Everil Vane saw her in his arms by the river path.

It was a good stroke of policy, and Ulrica congratulated herself heartily upon it.

That Everil was weakly jealous, and capable of being turned from her lover by appearances which might seem against him, Ulrica had no doubt.

She recalled with delight the girl's proud, miserable face as she passed in the carriage with Sir Percival Rossmore and Lady Pendleton, and as she did so Ulrica laid down her crewel-work and built for herself a castle in the air.

A castle such as Everil Vane had been in the habit of building some few short days ago. A castle of which Leopold Ormiston was the lord and she the lady.

That he loved Everil devotedly Ulrica had no manner of doubt, and she also knew that he believed in her as the truest and purest of women. Knowing so much, it was upon this belief and this love that Ulrica Warner determined to work.

She had laid her plans well, and had skillfully commenced operations.

She had as cunningly misrepresented matters to Leopold Ormiston with reference to Everil as she had to Everil Vane with reference to Leopold Ormiston.

The result was that the man was in a state of torture.

He dared not address a letter to Everil to Pendleton Hall, and her presence in the carriage with Lady Pendleton and Sir Percival Rossmore seemed a sort of confirmation of all Ulrica had told him.

She was a thorough diplomatist. She knew how necessary it was for the man to have some one to speak to—some one to confide in—some one to speak to about Everil.

Her own intense desire to speak to some one about Leopold Ormiston had taught her that. Ulrica kept her own feelings strictly in the background.

She was merely sweetly sympathetic, and any one listening to the gentle platitudes of the rector's decorous daughter would never have suspected the volcano of passion which surged in her breast.

Ulrica had seen Leopold Ormiston at church on the Sunday evening before, and had exchanged a few words with him in the presence of her father.

She had noted his haggard, miserable look, and the frequent glances which he had directed towards the Pendleton pew, where Sir Percival Rossmore pompously answered the responses out of a huge brass-bound prayer-book.

By his side had stood Everil Vane, pale, haughty, and miserable-looking, never raising her eyes from the pages before her, and sweeping past Leopold Ormiston in the churchyard with, apparently, as much unconcern as though he were one of the humble headstones which bordered the path and marked the last resting-place of the rude forefathers of the village.

Exultingly Ulrica thought over all this, and wondered if Leopold Ormiston would come up and talk about the matter to her.

She longed—nay, she hungered for a touch of his hand, for a sound of his voice.

In a moment of passionate love she recalled his looks, his words, his tones, and a flush of pleasurable anticipation passed over her face as she heard her father's well-known step at the gate.

Her father's step, but accompanied by some one else's.

Ulrica's heart beat high.

Her back was to the path, so that she could not at first see her father's companion.

Ulrica's heart beat nervously as she took up her crewel-work and made a pretence of working.

She was quite aware her countenance betrayed such agitation that she did not dare to advance to meet her father and—

"Ulrica, my dear," said the gentle, meek voice of the rector.

"Yes, father," she replied, rising and advancing from the porch.

All the blood in her body seemed to recede back to her heart with disappointment.

Her father's companion was a weary-looking, travel-stained woman.

But it was part of Ulrica Warner's policy never to let anybody—not even her own father—see her in the least degree put out, or taken at a disadvantage.

So in one moment her face was sweetly dressed in sympathetic smiles, and she was the rector's daughter and helper from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot.

"What is the matter, father?" she inquired, coming down the path with a concerned look upon her face.

"Here is a traveller I overtook upon the road," said the good rector, benignantly. "She asked me if I could direct her to somewhere for a lodging for the night, and I thought she could not do better than come here. You can make up a bed, Ulrica, can you not?"

"Certainly," she replied, promptly and sweetly, at the same time covertly scrutinising the woman. "Will you come in and take off your bonnet?"

"Thank you," said the woman, wearily. "I am so tired that I cannot tell you how welcome is the thought of a rest without the fatigue of going any further to-night?"

"Were you going much further?" inquired Ulrica, as she ushered her guest into a small, pretty chamber, with passion-flower and clematis peeping in at the chintz-draped windows.

"To Pendleton Hall," was the reply. "It is in this neighbourhood, is it not?"

"Yes; it is about a quarter of an hour's walk from here," volunteered Ulrica, speaking carelessly, as though the subject of Pendleton Hall were of the utmost indifference to her. "It belongs to Lady Pendleton."

"So I understand," replied the woman, removing her waterproof cloak and plain black straw bonnet.

"You know Lady Pendleton?" said Ulrica, questioningly, and wondering to what class the woman belonged.

"Not at all."

"She is a parishioner of my father's," keeping strictly to her character of the benevolent rector's daughter.

"She has a granddaughter, has she not?" suddenly and irrelevantly said the stranger.

"Yes, such a sweet girl. She is the dearest friend I have in the world; but I am sorry to say I am going to lose her," and Ulrica sighed most naturally.

"Indeed."

The woman sat down, looked out of the window, and seemed to fix her eye on vacancy.

"How are you going to lose her?"

"She is about to be married," continued Ulrica, who considered she could not give sufficient publicity to the matter. "Miss Vane is about making a brilliant marriage. Her fiancé is the wealthy Sir Percival Rossmore, of Rossmore Manor."

The woman sat very still.

She nervously plaited and unplaited her skirt as she asked:

"Is she, indeed! I know something of the family," she continued, with a little hollow,

affected laugh; "perhaps I may see the wedding. Is it to come off soon?"

"Well, I really am not sure. But if you are going to Pendleton Hall I daresay you will hear all about it."

"Yes—yes—I daresay!" she replied, hurriedly and nervously.

"And, now, will you not come down and have some tea?" suggested Ulrica, who did not despair of finding out some gossip from her guest. "And pray tell me what we are to call you?"

"Oh!" (the woman seemed confused) "call me Mrs. Parker."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Wily, sir?"

"Ay, sir, as stealthy and wily as a cat or a woman."

CUMBERLAND'S PLAYS.

So charming a hostess did Ulrica Warner prove with her tenderly-sympathetic manner that the so-called Mrs. Parker fell asleep that night in the fragrant lavender-scented chamber thanking her lucky stars that her lines had fortunately fallen in such pleasant places.

During tea-time no word had been said concerning Pendleton Hall and its inhabitants, and as the good rector hated gossip cordially, thus it came to pass that the conversation was chiefly confined to generalities, and no questions were asked the wayfarer.

However, when Mrs. Parker had retired to her room the rector said to his daughter:

"I wonder who she is? She is rather peculiar in her manner."

"I have no idea, dear," replied his daughter, sweetly. "Yes, she seems an eccentric sort of person."

"When she spoke to me on the road she seemed so strange in her manner that I did not like the idea of her going off to the village inn," continued the good man, "that was why I asked her to come on here."

"Just like your kind heart," exclaimed Ulrica, without feeling one word she said.

She only congratulated herself upon fate so strangely putting the game so completely into her hands.

"You told Mrs. Parker that we breakfasted at half-past eight, did you not?"

"Yes, father."

"Then good-night, my dear. I hope the poor woman will have a good night's rest."

"Good-night, father. I am sure I hope so."

But in the morning the stranger did not make her appearance at the breakfast-table at the appointed time.

Fearing she might be ill, Ulrica went up and tapped at her bed-room door.

There was no reply.

She tapped again, and this time a faint moan proceeded from the chamber.

Ulrica gently opened the door and found Mrs. Parker still in bed.

She was lying there faintly moaning, a bright red spot upon either cheek and her eyes feverishly bright.

Ulrica took her dry, hot hand, saying:

"We were afraid you were ill as you did not come down to breakfast. You seem quite feverish."

"Yes," she replied, half-incoherently. "I am ill—very ill, and I am very weary—so weary. I am afraid I shall fail before I have accomplished my desire. Oh, my head! my head!"

"Keep as quiet as you can, now," said the wily Ulrica, in a soothing tone. "I shall come up to you presently, and we shall see if I cannot help to accomplish your desire."

Mrs. Parker looked at her as steadily as her feverishly-glittering eyes would admit of.

Then, suddenly starting up in bed, she exclaimed, as she eagerly caught hold of Ulrica's dress:

"Will you be my friend here? Will you promise to help me?"

"I promise," replied Ulrica, gently laying her back again on the bed, "but only on condition that you do not now excite yourself. Just think of all you have got to tell me," she continued, craftily, assuming that the woman had said so, "therefore you must not waste your strength."

You must promise to lie here quietly and take a cup of nice tea, and then I shall come up and listen to what you have got to say."

The woman was a tool in the hands of the rector's crafty daughter.

Too weary and brain-fatigued to reason, she passively submitted to whatever Ulrica proposed.

"Come back! Come back!" she cried, excitedly, as Ulrica was leaving the room.

"Now, you see, you are not obeying me," said Ulrica, reproachfully. "Wait until I bring you up a cup of tea, and when you are refreshed you can say whatever you like."

"No! no!" exclaimed Mrs. Parker. "There is one thing you must promise me before you leave the room."

"What is it?"

"You will promise"—here she looked furtively around—"you will promise that you will not let Sir Percival Rossmore put me into the asylum again?"

Even Ulrica Warner was startled at this.

As Mrs. Parker spoke Ulrica heard her father's voice calling, and giving a hasty assent, she descended to the breakfast-room. But even whilst going down the stairs Ulrica had decided what course to pursue.

She decided first to hear the woman's story before saying anything to her simple-minded, straightforward father, who would at once spoil all her schemes by his deliberate openness of action.

"That poor woman seems quite worn out with fatigue," said Ulrica, as she poured out her father's coffee. "I have just ordered a cup of tea to be made for her. Poor thing! I think she had better lie there and rest for a little."

"Do just as you like, my dear," said the placid rector. "Keep the poor woman as long as you like, and if you think the doctor ought to see her—why, send for him."

"Oh, I don't think that is at all necessary. She just wants rest. She is evidently not strong—she has come a long journey—and that and the heat of the weather has been too much for her."

To Mrs. Parker Ulrica carried the tea and some dry toast; but the woman could not eat. The tea actually seemed to excite her. She became more and more feverish and excited beneath Ulrica's careful questioning, her brain became more and more confused, her answers more and more incoherent.

But before noon on that day Ulrica Warner had managed to extract her history from her, and by resorting to the not-sufficiently appreciated process of putting two and two together she endeavoured to become possessed of quite as much of the woman's story as she had told to Henry Garthside and to Barbara Finlay.

"And now," said Ulrica, "tell me your name."

"It is not Parker—it is not Mrs. Parker. Of course you know that?" she exclaimed, excitedly.

"Yes, of course I knew that," asserted Ulrica, calmly. "Now, tell me what it is."

"My name is Lady Rossmore," she exclaimed, with a ludicrous assumption of dignity, "and my name before my marriage was Muriel Oliphant."

"And you say you were married at Brentwood?"

"Yes. I took the name of Mary Ogle, and my husband that of Preston Rivers."

All day long Ulrica Warner stayed in the woman's room, winning golden opinions from the household for her gentleness, courtesy, and Christian kindness towards the poor wayfarer.

The real truth was Ulrica did not dare to let anyone listen to Muriel's incoherent babblings. The rector's daughter was very nearly in a dilemma.

What was to be done with this woman? Did she make any disturbance, and openly assert herself to be the wife of Sir Percival Rossmore, that would not suit Ulrica at all, for then the marriage with Everil would be broken off, and it was likely as not that Leopold Ormiston and she would come together again.

Yes. The woman must be disposed of.

Evidently a private lunatic asylum was not a safe place.

Stay!

Ulrica thought of a plan.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE MOON'S ATMOSPHERE.—Professor Alexander brought forward, at a recent meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, a variety of evidence, tending to indicate some envelope, like an atmosphere, for the moon. The evidence was principally drawn from observations during eclipses. The explanations usually offered for the bright band seen around the moon at such times were fully considered, and shown to be inadequate, though good as far as they would apply. The ruddy band of light is much too broad to be the sun's chromosphere. Various experiments proved that it was not a consequence of contrast alone. It was most apparent in those instances where the moon was nearest the earth. It could be best accounted for by supposing an atmosphere to the moon—a thin remnant of ancient nebulosity, comparable to that which accompanies the earth and gives rise to the appearance of the aurora borealis.

REMARKABLE MARKSMANSHIP.—Captain Bogardus, a well-known American marksman, recently accomplished the remarkable feat of breaking 5,000 glass balls inside of as many consecutive minutes, the missiles being shot from a double-barrelled gun. The balls were thrown up from spring traps and were shattered in the air. The feat was accomplished within a margin of 19 minutes and 25 seconds to spare. It is stated that the weapon, weighing 10 pounds, was lifted and aimed 5,300 times, which work is equivalent to 318 foot pounds per minute, accomplished by the arms alone and continued for over eight hours. This must be added to the brain work involved in aiming the gun, in order to perceive the nature of the remarkable skill and endurance of the marksman.

A NEW DEVICE FOR RAISING WATER.—M. Th. Foucault has invented a new apparatus for raising water by means of ammoniacal gas. If strong aqua ammonia is heated to the boiling point of water, so much ammoniacal gas is given off as to give rise to a pressure of seven and a half atmospheres. By forcing the gas into a strong reservoir in which there is a layer of petroleum upon which ammonia has no action, and, after it is filled, allowing the boiler to cool by aid of a jet of cold water, the gas will return to the boiler, thus creating a vacuum in the reservoir. If now the reservoir is connected by a pipe with the source of water and the stop-cock opened, water will rush in to fill the reservoir. By heating the boiler and again expelling the gas, it exerts a pressure on the water and drives it out of the tank, and by condensation a vacuum is again produced and a new supply of water rushes in. The inventor claims that the consumption of fuel is insignificant compared with that of a steam-engine of equal capacity.

RAILWAY SIGNALS.—An invention that may prove valuable to railway companies and passengers alike has been patented. Its chief object is to surmount the difficulties at present attendant on fogs. It is connected to the ordinary semaphore, to be worked in unison with it, and, in some cases, without it. Its chief object, explains the "British Architect," is to transfer to the engine, adjacent to the driver, an exactly similar signal to the one required of the different signals of the semaphore (red or green) to be relied upon with confidence at all such times as when those of the semaphore become obscured and useless by fog and snow-storm, and at the same instant of time as the required signal thus appeals to his eye, a similar appeal is made by "gong" or bell to his ear; such a signal being all that can be desired. Sounding the whistle, shutting off steam, and applying the brake could also be effected by the

same means; but these latter points are discarded as not being necessary after giving the signal, and for the simple reason that it would be considered as a kind of tampering with those appliances for which drivers, firemen, and guards alone are responsible.

NEW FAST WAR STEAMER.—The "Iris" has been constructed as a twin-screw despatch steamer for the English Government. At a recent trial trip of six hours' full power run, which extended to about 120 knots, 96 were completed during the official six hours. The mean pressure of steam in the boilers was 62 lbs. The starboard engine made 91 and the port engine 89 and a half revolutions per minute. The mean total horse power developed was 7088.52, the contract being for 7,000. Sixteen knots per hour was the speed attained; consumption of coal was 2.7 lbs. per indicated horse power per hour. The following are the principal dimensions of the "Iris": Length between perpendiculars, 300 feet; over all, 333 feet; extreme length, 46 feet 1 inch; depth in hold, 16 feet 3 inches. The armament is to consist of ten 64-pounders. She is barque-rigged with wooden masts, and is steered by hand gear. The ship is propelled by direct-acting, horizontal, compound four cylinder engines, designed to turn twin screws. There are four high pressure cylinders, with a diameter of 75 inches, the stroke being 3 feet. Steam is furnished by twelve boilers of slightly different dimensions. The total weight of the machinery, with water in the boilers and condensers, is about 1,000 tons. At the trial trip the mean draught of the vessel was 15 feet 8 inches forward and 20 feet 7 inches aft.

KEELY OR A RIVAL.—The "Bradley Propellor" is a vessel propelled by "a certain kind of gas, which is evolved by mechanical disintegration, the water being forced through solid silver by hydrostatic pressure, which is automatic and is operated by the engine. This product is introduced into small cells of one inch internal diameter, made of the best decarbonised steel, and there quickened into gas by heat, which does not need to be over the ordinary temperature to produce steam. There is no water introduced as water into the generators." The apparatus, it is stated, contains nothing but pure gas, without any likeness to a steam boiler. Three hundred pounds pressure can be had from a thimbleful of water, and the pressure can be raised any degree to thousands of pounds to the square inch by regulating the supply of water. The gas frequently reaches so intense a state as to show great signs of electrical action, but before being admitted to the cylinder of the engine it is oxidised, which fully prepares it to act with all the smoothness of steam on the piston.

HOW TO TEST CHALK IN MILK.—We have often pointed out the great usefulness of the lactometer as a tester of milk. As we all know it judges milk by its density, so that water being heavier than milk, the more water is added the richer the milk will appear. Chalk, starch, and some other substances are occasionally used to give an appearance of cream to milk which has been skimmed or diluted. Some may be detected by the microscope, but chalk soon settles to the bottom instead of rising to the top, and can best be tested in the following simple manner given in Household Chemistry: Allow the milk to stand in a tumbler for several hours; then pour it carefully out, leaving only the sediment at the bottom. Fill the glass with water, and again allow it to stand until the sediment has subsided. Repeat the washing with water a second time, and if there be any chalk in the milk it will now be seen as a white powder at the bottom of the glass. Pour off all the water you can, and add a few drops of vinegar to the sediment. If it consists of chalk it will effervesce distinctly, just as carbonate of soda does when treated with acid.

INCOMBUSTIBLE WRITING PAPER.—This has been invented by two Salamanca savants, which is warranted to resist the most intense heat. A single sheet will carbonise, but not burn; while,

if a roll of prepared paper be placed in the fiercest fire, although the outside leaves and the extreme edges may carbonise, the interior will remain unaltered, and the writing or printing will be perfectly legible. Papers already written or printed upon may undergo the process of preparation without injury.

SOME LESSONS FOR TEACHERS.

We are, all of us, teachers,
And the world is a school
Where the wise man's a pupil,
As well as the fool;

Where all must be learners,
From cradle to grave—
Clown and philosopher,
Parson and knave.

Young heads are giddy,
And young hearts are warm,
And make many blunders
For Age to reform;

Yet young heads are ready
And willing to learn;
And young hearts but seldom
Good counsellors spurn.

While old heads look backward
To days that are fled,
And take rules for the living
From the dust of the dead;

Young heads look forward;
The dead past is night;
They live in the present,
And their future is bright.

Although they differ
As heat does from cold,
Yet old heads from young may learn
As young heads from old.

The young I would caution;—
Be not overwise
When your elders, in trouble
Would have you advise.

Be glad to impart
What you're able to teach;
Be patient in listening,
And modest in speech.

The old who know little,
And talk much, should heed
Lest, in trying to teach,
They only mislead.

To the old who have wisdom
'Tis needless to say,
The grass must be seasoned
Before it is hay.

Let your truths be well studied,
Then plainly expressed,
And not in the garments
Of pedantry dressed.

Let no word of falsehood—
E'er fall from your tongue,
And all shall be bettered—
The old and the young.

G. B.

THE COQUITO PALM.—In Chili a sweet syrup, called miel de palma, or palm honey, is prepared by boiling the sap of the jubaña spectabilis to the consistence of treacle, and it forms a considerable article of trade, being much esteemed for domestic use as sugar. The sap is obtained by the very wasteful method of felling the trees, and cutting off the crown of leaves, when it immediately begins to flow, and continues to do so for several months, until the tree is exhausted, providing a thin slice is shaved off the top every morning, each tree yielding about 90 gallons. The small nuts, which resemble miniature cocoa-nuts, are used by the Chilean confectioners in the preparation of sweetmeats, and by the boys as marbles.

CURIOUS CUSTOM.

An English gentleman who has lately travelled in Palestine recently gave a description of the curious scenes that are enacted in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. He said when you first entered the church you would be surprised to see a party of soldiers with their swords by their sides, and their guns stacked within reach. It seemed a sacrilege in such a holy place, and struck one rather unpleasantly, but he soon found out the necessity for it.

According to the law of the country, every sect is allowed to worship there, and as it is considered equally sacred both by Christian and Mohammedans, all wish a time for their mode of worship.

The law allows them an hour each. At that hour those who have the first privilege enter, bringing with them whatever is necessary to conduct their particular religious rites. They go through their prayers and chants, and all is very quiet till about a quarter to seven, when those who have the privilege of the next hour begin to arrive. At first all is decorum, but presently the new-comers begin to hiss and mock.

As their numbers increase, and they become stronger, they shove and crowd, and as the time lessens they get more and more bold. A few minutes before seven they proceed to more forcible demonstration. They think if they can clear out these blasphemers a few minutes before the time they have done so much good for Him, while the worshippers, on the other hand, think if they keep possession a few minutes after the time they have done an equally good work. As some of these sects use torches, wax candles, staves, or crooks in their worship, they proceed to use them as weapons of offence or defence, and a regular melee ensues.

Then come in the soldiers, who separate the combatants by filing in between them, turning out those whose hour is up, and leaving the place in the possession of the last comers. If blood is shed the church is closed for the day. Such scenes are occurring all day long, and the presence of soldiers is absolutely necessary.

ALFRED G. VANCE'S ENTERTAINMENTS.

THE "Great Vance" has long been an expression "familiar as household words" in the mouths of that very large section of the public who know how to appreciate a thoroughly enjoyable entertainment. After having achieved unparalleled popularity in London Mr. Vance is day by day adding success to success as he proceeds on his provincial tour—notably at Lowestoft, Beccles, Norwich, and neighbourhood, where large audiences have been electrified by the rapidity with which impersonations absolutely complete in costume of king or costermonger, law-maker or tinker, succeed each other—each being rendered with that facial and vocal expression which has enabled Mr. Vance to defy successful rivalry.

By assiduously cultivating the gifts which Nature has so liberally bestowed upon him Mr. Vance is enabled to present an exceptionally wide field of human portraiture both male and female, but he does not rely solely upon his own powers, great as they undoubtedly are, for he has made a very judicious selection in securing assistants. Miss Eunice Irving, the daughter of the well-known comedian, Mr. Joseph Irving, is the leading lady of the party and possesses vocal and histrionic talents that render her Character Songs the worthy associates of those of Vance himself; while Mr. Charles Woodman is not unknown to fame as a valued favourite. It is said that Mr. Vance drew the largest audience ever known at the Brighton Aquarium—a testimony to the popularity of an entertainer who has "always something new" with which to amuse his audiences. Every one who has the opportunity should lose no time in being present at one of these performances in order to experience the fact that in Mr. Vance's hands "variety is" indeed "charming."



[A RELUCTANT LEAVETAKING.]

A WOMAN SPURNED.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I thought she loved me—she whom I
Had worshipped in the long ago.

Mrs. TARDY went down, expecting to find Kirke on the portico, as he usually awaited there the appearance of his guests in the morning.

But, to her surprise, he was not visible, and she sat down on one of the large chairs which stood on either side of the door.

She began to grow very impatient before anyone appeared to answer her queries as to the cause of her host's absence from his usual post.

At length, Dick, the personal attendant of his master, crossed the yard, and she called to him, and asked:

"Is Mr. Kirke going off again to-day, Dick? You seem to be busy preparing for something."

"Yes, marm, we're goin' off as soon as breakfast's over. My master got a small 'patch.'"

"A despatch!" exclaimed Mrs. Tardy, faintly, "And he said nothing of it to me last night, nor of his intention to leave this morning. Can anything have happened that he wished to conceal from me?"

The old lady drew a long breath, and sunk back in her chair.

She motioned to the man to leave her, and, a few moments later, Kirke came through the hall door, and cheerfully said:

"Good-morning, Mrs. Tardy. A lovely day, isn't it? The bright sun is making havoc with the filmy wreath of mist floating around the hill-sides. The foliage of the trees is beginning to put on its royal robes already, but you cannot imagine how magnificent this panorama is later in the autumn."

"Yes—yes—but I am not thinking of scenery now, Jemmy, lovely as the surroundings of this place are. What is taking you away so soon again? Have you heard any bad news? Dick said you had a despatch, and I feared it might be from Selwood. Yet, why should I think that when you said nothing about it last night?"

"Why, indeed, should you fancy such a thing?" asked Kirke, "when you had a letter from the professor last evening telling you that he is safe at home. It is unfortunately true that I must leave home this morning to be absent for a week, perhaps; but at the end of that time I hope to make a good report of myself, and to stay here more constantly than I have since you have been here."

"Thank you, Jemmy; you have removed a foolish fear that assailed me almost as a presentiment that something is wrong at Selwood. I am not the woman I once was, and a very little thing upsets me now. I used to laugh at nerves, but I know now what it is to have one's own all jangled out of tune."

"I assure you that I have had no bad news from Selwood," replied Kirke, glad that she had made no reference to Agnes. "You are getting stronger every day, and in a few more weeks I think you will be as well and as active as ever."

Constance was as quietly composed as ever. She had walked out of the shadow into the perfect day, and all doubt of the wisdom of her course had vanished.

She came forward, gave Kirke her hand, as was her custom when they met in the morning, and that, more than anything else, had kept alive the hope that she would eventually give it to him for all time to come.

Her eyes, deep dark, and full of sensibility, were lifted one instant to his, and they expressed all that he could have asked from his betrothed wife. She made a warning gesture toward Mrs. Tardy, and Kirke hastened to say:

"I am leaving home this morning, Constance, to be absent an indefinite time, and I would

esteem it a great favour if you will give me a few moments in the library before I go. Mrs. Tardy will not object to a private interview between us."

Constance blushed slightly, but she bowed her head in a graceful submission, as if she had said:

"You are the master I have chosen, and I obey this first request you make of me with the loving alacrity you have the right to expect from me."

He replied to the mute assent by lifting to his lips the slender hand he still held imprisoned in his own, and Mrs. Tardy brusquely said:

"When two people get to understand each other by signs alone it's high time that others should leave them to settle their affairs together. We'll go in to breakfast now, as there is the bell ringing, and after it's over I shall leave you to yourselves; but mind, I am not to be kept out of your confidence afterward."

She led the way into the dining-room, which had a lovely outlook toward the hills, and all that could be accomplished had been done to make the room look cheerful in spite of its sombre panelling of oak.

Each panel was framed in a carved wreath of flowers, fruits and vegetables, mingled together with much skill, and in each one a painting framed with only a gilt moulding was accurately fitted, and thus made to appear as a part of the decoration of the walls themselves.

In the front was a wide, low window similar to the one in the library, and in a recess on either side stood a pair of statues. One was a fisher-boy, and the other a girl with a bird.

The table was set out in front of the large window, and late in the season as it was, a bouquet of flowers was lying beside the plate of Constance.

"It is late for forget-me-nots," she said, and then uttered an exclamation of surprise as she lifted them up. "Look, Mrs. Tardy, did you ever see so perfect an imitation, and in gold too!"

The flowers were enamelled exquisitely, and were held together by a true-lover's knot, in the centre of which gleamed a large emerald of perfect shape and lustre. Concealed under the flowers was a long pin to fasten it to the dress as a breast-pin.

Constance glanced at the donor, and with shyness that was new to her, asked:

"Must I accept this? It seems to me a very costly offering, and yet I hardly know how to refuse it."

"Umph! put it in your dress, my dear, where it can feel the beating of the heart that has just awakened to the knowledge of itself," said Mrs. Tardy, smiling grimly.

"It was not made for you, it belonged to Jemmy's mother, and I have seen it before. If you hesitate now I shall hardly know what to think of you after what you said to me this morning."

"You shall not think that I will go back on my word," replied Constance, fastening the pin upon her breast, and smiling brightly upon her adviser.

"Well—this beats everything!" muttered the old lady, in a maze of bewilderment at the sudden turn affairs had taken. "Only yesterday she had nearly despaired of bringing Constance to reason," she said to herself, "and here she was this morning almost pledging herself to Kirke before her face."

She was infinitely pleased, but at the same time so astonished that she scarcely spoke again while they sat at the table. When they arose, she said:

"I will not be de trop any longer. I shall stay here and look at the pictures. When you are ready for my blessing, come and ask it. That's all I have to say."

Kirke only said:

"Thank you," and ringing for the house-keeper, he followed Constance, who had already effected her escape from the room. He found her on the portico, and with some embarrassment, she suggested:

"It is so lovely here, had we not better walk up and down while we are talking together, in place of going into the library?"

"That you may cheat me of my farewell kiss, for that is in your mind I can plainly see. No, no, Constance, I cannot submit to that. Besides, there is something here I wish to show you before I leave."

She took the arm he offered and submitted to his will, as she felt it would henceforth be her duty and her pleasure to do, for she feared no unreasonable demand from so generous and just a man.

When they entered the library he asked:

"Have you no wish to see into the room you have called the Blue Beard chamber?" and he pointed to the door of the apartment which opened from the one they were in. "If you desire to do so, you can enter it and gratify your curiosity."

Constance had bantered him more than once about the persistency with which this little nook was shut away from inspection, and she had become very curious as to what was so carefully concealed from visitors.

She laughed, and said:

"I have the right to enter this inner shrine now, for, of course, you will have no secrets that I do not share, now that I have given my heart and life into your keeping."

She crossed the room as she spoke, the door yielded to her touch, and she stood on the threshold a moment in silent surprise.

It was a picture gallery, lighted by a glass dome which almost covered the roof.

The walls were filled with familiar pictures, except the space just in front of the entrance.

There hung two small pictures, handsomely framed, in a line with each other.

These were her own paintings which he had undertaken to sell for her to a dealer, and she knew now that he had been her patron.

Tears came into her eyes, and she faltered:

"I appreciate your delicacy in concealing these from me till—till now. If I had known

—if I had suspected that you were the purchaser of my work I should have placed a lower estimate upon it. You paid a good price for these because you were interested in the artist."

"On my life!—on my soul!—no, Constance! I knew your great pride, and I dealt fairly by you. I took them to a dealer, who is himself a good artist, and learned from him how much he was willing to pay for them, and what price he would put on them when he offered them for sale. I paid you that and no more. I was the purchaser, and I had the right to offer you what they would have been worth in the market. My darling, do you think that I could have permitted your pictures to become the property of any other person? I loved you then, Constance, and I meant to win you. From the first day we met I have felt in the depths of my soul that you would yet be mine; that fate had brought to me the one woman in the world who was created for me, as I for her. My faith has not been in vain, Constance, for now I know that I have won you almost in spite of yourself."

As he spoke the faint cloud which had gathered on the expressive face of Constance was dissipated, and smiling through her tears, she softly said:

"Yes—you have conquered my doubts and fears, and I will—I can give you such tender and true affection as such love as yours demands. We shall be happy in our union, I truly believe."

Kirke took her in his arms and kissed her fervently.

Drawing from his pocket a massive gold ring he slipped it on her finger, saying, as he did so:

"This also belonged to my mother, and I have found a wife worthy to wear it. It is our betrothal ring, Constance, but when I come to wed you it shall be with a circle studded with the finest diamonds I can find, as a type of the purest and strongest bond which can exist between man and woman."

She lifted her eloquent eyes to his, and herself offered the kiss which sealed the compact.

They then made a tour of the gallery, and he pointed out to her those among the portraits that were most interesting to himself—his parents and the uncle from which he had inherited the estate on which he lived.

"My parents died when I was quite a small boy," he said, and I was sent to a public school, of which our good professor was luckily the head. He took a fancy to me, and when he married, my uncle consented that I should remain with him as a private pupil. My uncle never married, and that is how I came to inherit his large estate and the objects of art he collected during a residence of several years abroad.

After that they briefly discussed the errand on which Kirke was going, and he expressed his firm belief that he would be able to bring Manvers back with him, and when he was rescued he would telegraph to Agnes and her uncle to meet him at Kirkwood, where they could all consult together as to the best steps to be taken to bring his enemies to an account for the outrage which had been perpetrated against him.

At length, Kirke reluctantly said:

"If I would be in time for the train, Constance, I must go. We will see Mrs. Tardy first, and give peace to her heart by letting her know that our marriage will come off immediately after her return to Selwood. That was your promise, you know."

"All's well that ends well," said the old lady, graciously. "There comes the messenger of fate, Jemmy, to separate you from your betrothed; but if it isn't a matter of life or death I wouldn't go away from her to-day, if I were you. What can it be that hurries you away from your newly-found happiness?"

"I am going because I cannot help myself," replied Kirke, in some embarrassment. "It is a matter of vital importance that takes me away at this time, you may be sure, Mrs. Tardy."

"So most men say to their women-kind when they are ready for a tramp, but I believe you are in earnest, Jemmy, so we must let you go, and wish you well on your way."

"Thank you."

And he thought with compassion for her how little she dreamed of how vital to the future of one she dearly loved was the success of the errand which tore him from his home at this happy crisis in his life.

But he went cheerfully, confident in the hope that he should accomplish his object, and bring Manvers back with him before his old friend received the shock of learning what had befallen him.

Dick passed the window leading his master's horse, and a few minutes later the two were going at full speed down the long avenue, for they had barely time to gain the station before the train would pass.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ah! now I see a faint red ray
Like early morning far away.

KIRKE reached town that night, and before he slept he sought the office of that journal in which the statement concerning Christopher Markley had been published.

By a lucky chance the editor was still there, and he showed the paper which he had brought with him, and asked for such further information as Mr. Winter could supply. In reply he said:

"I can tell you very little more than is here stated. I believe that Kit Markley still lives unmolested in his cabin, though I have heard a rumour in town that a detective has lately been on his track. I cannot imagine what led to the visit that was made to him, for nothing came of it. The policeman went back no wiser than he came, as was to be expected, for Kit is a harmless imbecile, who would not be likely to do anything to embroil him with the law."

"You would not think so if you knew of what he is suspected. If he is not dangerous himself, he is connected with those who are, and he implicitly obeys their commands."

"Umph! been smuggling, I suppose, or using his cavern to conceal stolen goods; yet I should hardly have suspected him of either."

"It is something worse than that. You have, of course, read the account of the mysterious disappearance of a young merchant who is accused of running away with a large sum of money. The brother of Kit Markley was in the employment of the firm of Brenton and Manvers, and from facts known to me concerning him and the partner who is absent, it is my firm conviction that Julian Manvers has been made the victim of the wickedness of those two men."

"I am the personal friend of Manvers, and a more honourable, high-toned man never lived. By mere chance the account you gave of this Kit Markley came under my observation, and I felt convinced that in following-up the clue thus furnished I should be able to rescue Manvers, and enable him to fix the guilt of his abduction on those who caused him to disappear for ends of their own."

Mr. Winter slowly said:

"I have taken much interest in this case myself, and commented on it in my paper. If I can aid you to throw any light on it I am ready to do so. I know something of John Markley, and I have reason to believe him a much worse man than his brother, though Kit is under the ban of the law. He was in this place a short time after Mr. Manvers disappeared, and he told the proprietor of the hotel at which he put up that he came to visit his brother who had been ill. I was surprised at the time that he spoke of this visit, because evil to Kit might have resulted from it."

"The old charge of murder still hangs over him, and he may yet be prosecuted for it. People have let him alone because the man he killed was a good riddance, and the poor fellow only acted in self-defence. The detective I spoke of made minute inquiries about John

Markley; as to what time he came, and whither he went. As nothing came of it I supposed that he had managed to baffle inquiries, or that there was nothing worth inquiring about."

"The policeman could not have been aware of the existence of the cavern behind the cabin of the recluse, or he might have had another story to tell. We must search that and, dead or living, we shall find Julian Manvers there. If you can aid me to get out a warrant for the arrest of Kit Markley on the old charge of murder, and obtain the assistance of two able-bodied men to enforce it, I think we shall find what I am in search of. I do not wish to do more with the man than to frighten him into confession, nor do I wish John Markley to know what is going on here till proof of his guilt, and that of his accomplice, Brenton, is in my hands. You will consider what I have told you as confidential till the proper time to publish it arrives."

"Yes—I see—you wish to spring a mine on them. I will help you to get the warrant, and go with you myself. I have a man in the office who came from the wild country in which Kit has taken refuge, and he can guide us to the very spot. We must act under the protection of the law, but from what you have said I do not suppose you wish to take a sheriff and his posse with you. If you went regularly to work we would have many detentions, and the affair would become public at once."

"You understand my wishes perfectly, and I thank you for taking such interest in my success. I have my servant with me; we shall be four against one, and we can easily manage the man we are in pursuit of. If he will tell all he knows I do not care to meddle any further with him. It is with his employers that I have to deal; the poor, half-witted creature you describe can scarcely be held accountable, and he may be allowed to escape after we are through with him—that is, if no harm has happened to Manvers. In that case the law shall settle with him for his misdeeds."

"It is lucky you came to me, Mr. Kirke, for I have an old score to settle with John Markley, and I shall be glad to pay him back for swindling myself and my brother out of the very tract of land we are going to visit. It's a long story, and I cannot tell it now, and it happened long ago. 'The mills of the gods grind slowly,' but in this case I hope they will 'grind exceedingly small.' I can get you the warrant we need without any publicity, for my brother is a magistrate, and if he is told that John Markley is to be brought to grief by issuing it, he will do so, and be quiet about it till he is permitted to speak."

"I am indeed in luck at the very start, and that encourages me to hope that our quest will be successful."

In half an hour their plans were arranged, and Mr. Winter assured Kirke that by ten o'clock next morning he would meet him at the railway, accompanied by Osborn, the journeyman of whom he had spoken, and in his pocket he would bring the warrant for what they were about to undertake.

Rejoicing in the good fortune which had so far attended his efforts to serve Manvers, Kirke went back to the hotel where he had left his servant, and slept soundly till he was summoned from his couch by Dick.

The next day was clear and warm, and in good spirits he joined Winter and his companion at the station.

He found both his new allies agreeable and intelligent, and both were keenly interested in the search they were about to make.

Osborn had grown up within a few miles of the cave against which Markley had built his house, and he said that in his boyhood he had explored it many times as far as he dared, but that there were many windings into which no one had ever penetrated.

Dick was apprised of the object of their journey, and was deeply interested in its success as soon as he understood that Manvers was imprisoned against his will, and, perhaps, in danger of losing his life.

In a few hours they reached the river, and landing in a wild spot they struck into an un-

travelled mountain path which wound upward, occasionally offering magnificent glimpses of scenery.

Osborn led the way with confidence, for every part of the ground was familiar to him, and he assured them that Kit's eyrie, as he called the place they were seeking, was but three miles from the river.

In spite of the roughness of the road they made good speed, and in little less than an hour from the time of starting their guide cried out:

"There it is, Mr. Kirke, and the old villain is at home, for smoke is coming from the chimney."

Kirke looked in the direction he pointed, and saw, far up on the side of the mountain they were skirting, a small excrescence which, but for the smoke rising above its roof, he would never have taken for a house.

Time and weather had harmonised its outward aspect with its surroundings till it was almost indistinguishable from the low undergrowth which had sprung up around it.

A more desolate or uninvitable abode it would be impossible to conceive; and the thought that so bright and gay a spirit as Manvers was shut away in such a spot from all communication with the outward world struck a chill to the very soul of his friend.

He impulsively quickened his speed, and the others pressed closely after him. The pathway, for it was nothing more, wound around the mountain side, gradually rising higher and higher, till it stopped abruptly on the plateau on which the cabin was built, with not more than six feet between the front door and the sheer descent of many hundred feet to the valley below.

The fire seemed to have been extinguished hastily, for smoke had ceased to ascend from the chimney, and to all their applications for admittance no reply was made.

"The fox has taken to his covert," said Osborn, "but we'll soon unearth him. He little knows who is on his track, or he wouldn't hope to escape us. I think I can find my way through his cave quite as well as he can. I'll thunder at the door again, though, for if he has anything to hide, he'll hardly go into the prison himself. He'll face us, and try to mislead us."

He kicked the heavy door, and called out:

"Open in the name of the law."

At this summons the door unclosed slowly, and a tall, unkempt man, dressed in buckskin, appeared in the aperture.

His long hair and tangled beard, nearly concealed his cadaverous face, and his eyes, deeply sunk in his head, had the startled expression common to all hunted animals.

In a dull voice, almost destitute of vibration, he asked:

"What is your business with me, gentlemen? After all these years am I to be brought to account for that old affair? Is that what brings you here?"

"Our errand is to arrest you for that, Kit Markley," said Mr. Winter, "but it will go hard with you if you do not give a true account of a later and more atrocious crime than even the murder of Tim Sullivan. Stand aside and let us enter your shanty. We have a search warrant for what you are hiding here."

No change passed over the sunken, sallow face. Kit shrugged his shoulders indifferently, and said:

"You'll find nothing here to pay you for your trouble. What should I conceal in this poor cabin? There was a man here lately on such a foolish errand, but he went away again, satisfied that there was no place to hide even a kitten. As to the charge about Sullivan, I only acted in self-defence, as you must know, Mr. Winter."

"Yes, I know that; but this is a different affair, and we know more about the capabilities of this place than the detective did. Stand aside, I say, and let us enter."

"One man cannot resist four, so I suppose I must submit. Come in, then, and examine the poor den that serves me as a shelter. It is

wretched enough, but it is better than a prison cell."

The visitors entered and looked around the bare room.

But they did not pause there.

Leading the way, Osborn passed into the inner apartment, and pointing to the wood piled up against the wall, said:

"The entrance to the cave is behind that, and the person we are in search of will be found there, if he is here at all."

Kirke was watching the face of Markley, and he saw a slight change pass over it at the words of Osborn, but he quickly said:

"You are welcome to remove the wood if you choose, but you will have your labour for nothing. You will find a dead wall behind it."

"We shall see that," replied Osborn. "I know what is behind it as well as you do, Kit Markley."

"Very well; look and see which of us is right," was the stolid reply.

And he looked on while the others rapidly threw aside the wood, expecting every moment to find the low opening which led into the cavern.

But when the wall was laid bare there was no evidence that such a thing had ever existed, and Kirke looked at Mr. Winter in blank dismay.

"You see," said Kit, with a low chuckle; "you've thrown down all my wood that I had piled up for the winter; but that don't matter much if I'm to be taken away from the place. I hope you are satisfied now."

"Don't whoop till you are out of the woods, Kit," said Osborn. "I was raised in these diggings, and I've been through the hole in this wall many a time when I was a boy. You've found out some ingenious way to shut it up, but I'll soon show you that I'm as cute as you are. Here goes."

And he snatched up a billet of wood and threw it with all his force against the solid wall of rock.

It rebounded without any apparent effect, and Kirke began to fear that Osborn was not so well informed as to the localities as he had boasted. But the young man gaily said:

"Better luck next time," and lifted another billet. "The hole is certainly here, Mr. Kirke. One of you look after Kit, or he may cut and run when he finds I know what I am about."

The caution came in time, as Markley was moving slowly toward the door, preparatory to an escape from his captors. Dick threw himself upon him and growled:

"No—ye don't do that."

Finding his purpose defeated, Markley tried to shake off the man's hold as he grimly said:

"Go on, then, and I wish you joy of what you may find. I shut up the place because Tim Sullivan used to come out of it at night to mock at me and threaten me. There's nothing in there."

He did not make this admission till a rent had been made by repeated blows against the apparently solid wall, and on examination it was found that a door had been made to fit the aperture opening into the cave, and ingeniously plastered over with mud, into which small fragments of stone had been imbedded.

The wall had been filled in around the frame in the same manner, and without the knowledge of the place possessed by Osborn its existence would never have been suspected.

A supply of candles had been brought with the party, and in a few moments each man had a lighted one in his hand.

Kirke now sternly spoke to the recluse:

"Go before us and point out the place where your prisoner is concealed, and do it quickly, or it will be worse for you than you imagine."

"There is no one there," obstinately asserted Markley. "I'm afraid to meet Tim Sullivan, for he stays in there."

"Something worse will happen to you than meeting a ghost, if you do not obey me at once. And he drew a pistol from his pocket and levelled it at the shrinking wretch. "Julian Manvers, the victim of your base brother, is

hidden in that cave, and if you do not show the way to him your life will not be worth an hour's purchase."

Dick, who still held on to his prisoner, here pushed him towards the opening, saying, gruffly:

"You'd better git on or master'll shoot, and he never misses his mark."

Finding himself at bay with no chance of escape, Kit shambled forward, saying:

"I'll go sooner than be shot, but it's no use. There's nobody but Tim there, and I only wish he'd scare you as he does me when he comes after me in the night. What should I know about this Manvers, or about my brother's doings? Till I was sick lately I haven't seen him for years."

"It is enough that he visited you lately to assure me that we have not come here in vain. Lead on."

(To be Continued.)

THE ONLY SIN.

Most people have their pet virtues and their pet vices, their special likes and dislikes, their favourite hobbies, crotchets, and corns. So also the society of every period has its special prejudices. If we analyse the character of the society of our own day, we find that it is generally tolerant to a fault, that its likings and desires are unusually broad, that it will endure many things which it formerly winced at, and will acquit with any notoriety, be he saint or sinner. But there is one thing which it will not tolerate—one thing which it regards as a deeply-dyed sin, in fact as the only sin that is mortal and utterly unpardonable. Need we say that this crime for which there is no forgiveness, this iniquity which deserves the very innermost circle of the Inferno, is Poverty.

Almost every other vice, folly, or error may be excused under the head of "indiscretions," but no such sanctuary exists for the vice of poverty. The form of this vice which society most keenly resents is "genteel poverty," and by this expression we mean the impoverished condition of those who were once rich. There is something singularly "unbeautiful" (to use the modern æsthetic slang) in meeting with practical demonstrations of the fact that people as well off as ourselves become actually poor. That which has happened once may happen again, and it is unpleasant to reflect that we ourselves are liable to the caprices of fate. This feeling often outweighs that of commiseration for the sufferer, for peccuniosity is the least romantic of all misfortunes.

When once a man has been rich, his impoverishment is regarded by society as an absolute insult. It is true that his former acquaintances and friends may profess to be sorry for him; but their sorrow is of the same nature as that which they would feel were he to commit murder, and, pained as they are at the thought, their private opinion is that the only decent thing he can do is to retire into obscurity and allow his very name to sink into oblivion. The body of the murderer is buried in quicklime to ensure its speedy annihilation, and the memory of the ruined gentleman is blotted out with little less rapidity. But, besides these offenders, there is a large class of human beings who have been, as it were, born in sin.

How sad it is to contemplate this wicked race, the unholy company of "poor relations."

Why they were ever called into being is, to their wealthier brethren, an unexplained mystery. If they are shown a certain amount of pity, they are made to feel how much better the world would get on without them.

SIGNOR SALVINI, the sculptor of Bologna, has finished the model of the statue which is to be erected in 1880 at Arezzo, in honour of Guido, the inventor of the notation which bears his name, and whose death is assumed to have occurred in 1050.

OUR WASTE LAND.

THE question as to whether we do not allow a great deal that is cultivable to lie waste is a question of the highest importance. Much of our cultivated land, says a contemporary, is only half cultivated and a great deal is not at all. It is far too readily assumed that our uncultivated land is uncultivable, while much of it is only so long as the cultivator is burdened by restrictions.

Our American cousins are not only supplying us with corn and meat, but, to a large extent, with fruit. The fruit crop of Michigan is worth £800,000 per annum. Last year the United States exported to Europe 14,000,000 lbs. of dried fruit and £145,000 worth of canned fruits. In this age of tin there is hardly a grocer but has American fruits on sale. Our small cultivators can compete with them if they had only a fair chance.

In the parish of Cudham may be seen large, well-built houses, with fruit gardens surrounding them. The owner of these were ploughmen and shepherds thirty years ago. Acre by acre they stubbed the land which the late Lord Stanhope had cleared, hiring it on a twenty years' lease at 10s. an acre, its average value as woodland. The land so improved that when their leases ran out the rent was raised to 25s., which they gladly paid. To-day these men are cultivators of from thirty to sixty acres, and living in their own houses, built at a cost of from £300 to £400 each.

Mr. Henley, the member for Oxfordshire, continues the same authority, has on his estate some large allotments for which men are paying more than double the amount which a large farmer declined to give because the land was naturally so poor. There are hundreds of parishes where men are paying for allotments at the rate of double and treble the rent of the contiguous land.

THE REUNION.

IN the home of Maude Ingraham, the child of the great banker, the tables were spread with the luxurious repast that was to be offered to expected callers, the drawing-room, fragrant with rare exotics, was closed and brilliantly lighted, and Mrs. Holt, the ex-governess and present companion of the motherless girl, was fussing here and there before dressing, to be sure everything was in order before the guests arrived.

There was a shade of sadness upon the motherly face of the old lady, and more than once she wiped a tear from her eyes, murmuring:

"Ten years to-day! ten years to day."

In a room above the drawing-room Maude Ingraham was sitting in a wide armchair before an open grate fire, not asleep, but none the less lost in "love's young dream."

Upon her slender finger was a costly diamond ring, put there only the previous evening by Walter Dunn, her accepted suitor, and her father had promised to present the lover to his friends as Maude's future husband.

A dress of snowy tulle, fine lace and delicate rose silk was spread upon the dressing table ready to adorn the pretty blonde, and Finette, her maid, wondered, in regions below stairs, why Miss Maude did not ring the bell to have her hair dressed.

In the midst of her musing, Maude was interrupted by a servant who announced:

"A woman who begs to see you, miss!"

"Did she send her name?"

"No, miss. She is miserably dressed."

"Let her come. It is a new year, and a good day to help the poor."

The man went downstairs again, and in a few moments a woman appeared at the door.

Though it was dead winter and bitter cold, her dress was a shabby, patched calico, covered by a miserable apology for a shawl, and her

bonnet was a corner of the same shawl folded over her head.

She was very pale, very thin, a most wretched object.

She stood silent a moment after closing the door behind her, and Maude looked at her with puzzled eyes, till slowly, a tender smile came upon the pallid face.

Then, with a great cry, Maude rushed forward, and gathered the slender, wasted figure in a close embrace, raining kisses upon her lips and cheeks, sobbing over and over:

"Oh, Lena! Lena!"

When her first burst of joyful welcome was over, she drew her visitor to the fire, gently placed her in the deep armchair, and knelt beside her, stroking the white cheeks with loving touch.

"Are you so glad I came, Maude?"

The question was asked with a wistful love, and eyes full of deep happiness.

"Glad! I can never tell you how glad!"

"And my father? Does my father ever speak of me?"

Maude's face saddened instantly.

"I see," said Lena, softly. "But I came to make one last plea for forgiveness, Maude."

As if to answer her words there was a tap at the door, and a voice asked:

"May I come in?"

"Yes, father," said Maude, springing up to open the door.

Mr. Ingraham entered the room with a smile upon his lips.

But in a moment it vanished as his eyes fell upon the white face resting against the armchair.

There was no glad recognition as he asked, coldly:

"What is that woman doing here?"

"Oh! father, do not—oh, do not speak so!" Maude sobbed, taking both his hands in her own.

"See how pale and ill she looks. She has come for forgiveness—for a place in her home. Oh! for my sake, forgive her!"

And the stranger in her own home spoke no word, watching father and sister with eager eyes.

"For your sake!" repeated Mr. Ingraham.

"It is for your sake I will send her away. You were but a child, Maude, when she left us. You did not understand the disgrace she brought upon her father's house."

"But now—" Maude would have pleaded.

"Listen, said her father, in a cold, stern voice, with his eyes as full of pain as they were of anger. "Ten years ago to-day, your birthday, Helena Ingraham eloped from her father's house with a man she had been forbidden to see or to know—a man her father knew for a gambler and a scoundrel. Is this not true, Helena?"

"It is true," was the quiet reply.

"Two years afterward, Harold Placide, as the man called himself, was arrested for bank robbery, was tried, convicted and sentenced to twenty years' hard labour. Then, when her sin was so sorely punished, I offered Helena a place in her old home if she would accept the divorce the law gave her. She refused. She lived as near the prison as she was allowed; she earned a scanty support at her needle, seeing her wretched husband when permitted, clinging to the name he had disgraced. And now she comes here, the convict's wife, to darken your life."

"My husband died two years ago."

"Dead! It is well! But you are none the less Helena Placide, a convict's widow. My will, made years ago, gives to Maude my entire estate; my home is all hers. If you come, you take from her all that is given to you."

"You hear, Maude?" said Helena.

"I hear," was the quick reply, "and I say that I will gladly share all—everything—with my sister, my only sister. If she was wrong at first, father, in that act of disobedience, she has atoned for it by years of poverty and suffering. Let her come home."

"Your friends may not care to visit where a convict's widow lives."

"Then their friendship is valueless to me."

"Your promised husband—"

"May pray that I will be as faithful to him as

Helena was to her husband," said Maude, blushing rosily.

Mr. Ingraham was silent for a moment, while his children watched his face with wistful eyes. The hard pressure of the lips softened to a smile, his eyes lost their angry expression, and turning to Helena, he said:

"Daughter!"

There was no other word as she sprang into his arms and lay there, all her calmness broken up in sobbing gratitude.

"Maude, can you dress your sister to assist at your reception?"

"Certainly I can."

"Walter is in the library, and I will explain to him. We will speak no more of the past, Helena."

Then he kissed her and left her with Maude—happy Maude, who had no thought of regret as she dressed her sister in heavy black silk and insisted upon being her sole lady's-maid.

There was a little ripple of excitement in society when Mr. Ingraham's two daughters appeared at the reception, and Mrs. Holt had to disappear every few minutes to wipe tears of happiness from her eyes at the family reunion.

Her two pupils were very dear to her, and no one had grieved more sincerely over Helena's disgrace and punishment than her old governess.

The next morning, when Mrs. Ingraham was in the library, looking over some papers, there was a rap at the door, and Helena came in, plainly but richly dressed, and with a package of papers in her hand.

"Father," she said, quietly, "can you spare me an hour or two?"

"Certainly."

"I want to explain to you something of the reason for my sudden return."

"Let the past die, Helena."

"Afterward I will, but I must speak of it now. You, who have had to suffer at his hands, look upon my husband as all depravity. I do not defend him! I know he wronged you deeply. I know he was a robber, a convict. But he loved me. Never by word or look did he remind me that I was a portionless bride, never did he urge me to seek relief from you until after he was sentenced, when he begged me to accept your offer. He had been in prison two years when his brother came from Australia and found him. He was a wealthy man, and would have provided for me if I had permitted it. But I would not. Much older than Harold, he was a great invalid, and last September he died. He left to me, his brother's widow, property amounting to over twenty thousand pounds."

"Had he no relatives?"

"None! The two brothers stood alone in the world, and Godfrey chose to consider that I did more than a wife's duty in clinging to Harold through all. He was very ill before he died, and I was allowed to visit him in the hospital where he engaged a room, and soothe his last hours."

"So you are independent?"

"But that is not all, father. I feel as keenly as you can the shadow I have thrown across Maude's life. I have been in the city ever since Harold died, and have watched my sister often when she had no suspicion that I was near her. I have no one now to love but my father and my sister, and I longed unutterably to be reconciled to them, to have them once more give me words of affection. But, for Maude's sake, I would not come, even after I knew I need be no burden, until—"

Here Helena paused, and fixing her large dark eyes mournfully upon her father's face, said softly:

"Until I was dying."

"Helena," her father cried, drawing her into a close embrace, as if to drive away the great destroyer. "My daughter, what do you mean?"

"I mean that a chronic disease, brought on by sorrow, poverty and toil, has developed into an incurable trouble that will soon end a life I am glad to lay down. It will not be many weeks, father, before your wayward child will bid you farewell to meet no more on earth. And I want

to have this money, that comes too late to help me, settled upon my sister. Will you examine the papers, and have a will drawn up for me?"

"Yes, child, yes. But first we must have Dr. Reynolds see you. He has known you from a child. He may suggest some remedy. Helena, I cannot give you up now."

"I will do all you wish, father. If I can prolong my life to be your companion after Maude is married I will. Do not tell her yet, father, I may live until she is Walter's wife, and I would not bring any sorrow into her present happy prospects."

"I will keep your secret, dear. And I will send Doctor Reynolds to see you at once."

But the doctor could give no new life to the weary woman who had so painfully atoned for the wilful disobedience of her girlhood.

With care and every comfort in her old home, surrounded by tender love, Helena faded so slowly that Maude did not suspect the kiss pressed upon her lips upon her wedding day was the last her sister would ever give her.

The excitement, the love that bore Helena up until after Maude was married, gave way when the bridal party left the house, and Mrs. Holt found her senseless in the drawing-room.

She sank rapidly then, insisting upon keeping the news from Maude, and died in her father's arms when March winds were blowing.

At the last, her words were ever:

"Maude—love—to my little sister—do not trouble Maude—she welcomed me home—a beggar—a convict's wife—little Maude—love—to my sister. Farewell—farewell—father—do not trouble Maude." A. E.

THE death of Carlo de Blasis, at Cernolio, is announced. He was not only at one time a graceful dancer in Italy, France, and England, but he was also famed as a ballet master in the three countries. His father was a composer of music, and a leading professor of the Conservatorium at Naples.

THE LOVE PACT.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

'Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now;
I know him by his pallid brow;
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery. BYRON.

AT that strange, awesome reverberation which stayed Robert Wilmer's steps by magic the Marquis D'Aubrión and Mrs. Wilmer hurried from the cottage.

The old Frenchman could form no idea of the cause of so portentous a sound, but Mrs. Wilmer's heart more truly felt what it might betoken.

They were too late indeed to see the mad rush heavenward of the scathing sheet of fiery gas whose sight had almost blasted Robert Wilmer's eyes—they were too late to witness the horrible hail back to earth of heavy beam, of ponderous stone and crushed and mangled human forms.

But they were in time for a sight which blanched to deadliest hue the wrinkled rosy cheeks of the aged woman and made the marquis, though he had looked upon the red results of many a stricken field unmoved, cower now before the wreck which the ruthless elements of inanimate nature can sometimes compass.

While a strange, fiery haze brooded over the scene and seemed so to swathe in its dim shade the figure of the young engineer that his form looked colossal as that of the very demon of ruin itself, there was yet sufficient of the light of day to realise the mischief which had been wrought.

From the cottages around now came troops of wailing women and crying children—widows and orphans, alas! who only too well knew and understood the extent of the catastrophe which had deprived them of their dear ones.

Men too came quickly—the miners who had ascended to bank before the explosion and others who had not yet descended.

By one consent—unanimous though unspoken—they gathered round the young engineer as acknowledging him their leader in the time of so dire a calamity.

Ere this, however, the Marquis D'Aubrión had grasped Robert Wilmer by the arm, saying anxiously:

"Are any lives lost, think you?"

"All who were in the pit, sir," replied Robert Wilmer, gloomily.

Then he turned away, and, at once assuming the position of leader, began the heart-trying labour of gathering together the bodies which lay around.

It was a scene which might have melted the sternest heart. Very sad were the brows, very set the lips of the young engineer and his assistants as one by one, from far and near, the mutilated remains which but a few moments before were living, breathing men, were lifted tenderly, despite their horrible disfigurement, and ranged in rows under the decent shading of sack and tarpaulin.

Two long lines of inanimate forms of men and boys were at last ranged in the spot of ground most available.

With excellent tact and considerate kindness Robert Wilmer had firmly ordered the women and children back to their homes, and the men had strongly seconded him. Though the young man could hold out but faint hope, still it was possible that he whom each weeping woman sought might not be amongst the victims, and at least the terrible task of recognition must be put off until the poor fragments of humanity were collected.

The Marquis D'Aubrión gazed on the work with a gloomy brow. In spite of his own engrossing cares, he could not but feel keen pity for men thus slain. Had they fallen indeed on the battle-field the stern old man would have thought pity misplaced, but for these swart toilers in the depths of earth this swift doom seemed sadly unmeet.

He felt that it was utterly in vain to stay at Suncross any longer.

Filled with his own absorbing anxieties and onerous duties, Robert had even for the time forgotten his fears for Eugénie, and, seeing clearly that he could not hope to gain further information from the young engineer, the marquis turned from the scene of disaster, and, making the best of his way from the vicinity, proceeded towards the railway station.

Robert Wilmer did not notice the old noble's departure—he had other subjects for thought.

He was standing between the sombre rows of the dead, surrounded by the group of miners, while his eye ranged over the little hillocks of the rough covering which hid the bodies.

The young man was counting the small elevations, each indicating where a miner lay.

"Are there here all who were in the pits, do you know, Hume?" he said in a hoarse whisper, turning to a man standing by who had quitted the mine when Hugh Mostyn gave the order.

The rough pitman shook his head sadly, while his eyes were moist with tears.

"Nothing like all, Mr. Wilmer," he responded.

The engineer looked still more anxious.

"When did Captain Mostyn leave, and where do you think we can find him?"

The miner fairly broke down at the question and sobbed like a child—the quick tear-drops channelling his begrimed cheeks.

"He didn't leave at all! I wish to Heaven he had! The men said he had given orders that we should all clear out and th' captain would come up with th' last. I wish we could change places."

The man meant it too. There was hardly one there who would not have risked his life for the frank young soldier who had won their esteem.

Wilmer's face assumed an agonised expression.

"It cannot be, Hume!" he cried. "Say that you are wrong—at least that you may be mis-

taken! Take my horse, Woodward, and ride to Mostyn Manor with all speed. He may be there."

"Stay, sir," replied Hume. "'Tis all useless. Th' cap'n's there," and he indicated the smoking shaft, "and Mr. Kesterton and many a sower more!"

Then Robert too broke down. He hid his face in his hands, that the men should not see the emotion which vanquished him. If this was indeed true he had lost one who to him, different as were their stations, had been a heart-brother—ay, loved far more dearly than is often a brother by ties of blood.

It seemed impossible that so great a calamity could be true. How could he bear it? How could he—for on him the task would devolve—dare tell the heart-broken father—the loving girl whom his roof had sheltered?

A heavy hand was laid on the young man's shoulder, a rough but not unkindly voice sounded in his ear.

"Dunna you break down, Mr. Wilmer," it said. "We're men you know, and we must not lose hope or courage, for the sake of th' women and others. I've heard o' folks who've been brought out o' such a pit as you alive—ay, after many days. Here's a many workings, and th' gas seems to ha' spent its force up'ards, like gunpowder, you see. Maybe th' cap'n's there alive, and maybe too if we work bravely we'll get him out and many another good fellow likewise."

Wilmer raised his head and grasped the man's hard palm with a vice-like pressure.

"You're right, Hume," he said, brokenly. "Thank you for even that hope. Yes, we will lose no time."

And in hasty council the best course of action was discussed.

When the Marquis D'Aubrión reached the railway he found no difficulty in ascertaining the destination of Jacques Cochart and his captive. The notary had been rather insolent towards the Looking-clerk when he applied for the two tickets because he had not been attended to with sufficient quickness.

It was part of the man's nature to be so towards those from whom he had nothing to hope or to fear. Where it was otherwise he could be cringingly obsequious.

"Yes, the ugly old scamp took two first-class to London," said the official. "You're a foreigner too, sir, but you're altogether another sort. I'd have such as he ducked in a horse-pond and bundled back to their own country if I'd my way."

This was all the information the marquis was able to gain, but it told him something. This abductor was evidently not an Englishman. It was equally certain that he was not Georges Grandet, for the dandy was under all circumstances a gentleman, and would not have comforted himself in such wise as had ruffled the irate railway official.

Nothing remained for the marquis but to also take a ticket for the metropolis.

His meditations during the journey were the reverse of pleasurable. Again and again recurred the fear that the girl had fallen into the power of an enemy.

Surely the insulting gesture he had seen the abductor make could only have been possible on the part of one who recognised him and was his foe.

Would he conceal the girl in some obscure part of the mighty London? thought the marquis. Would it be well to secure the aid of detectives to ferret out the hiding-place? Such a proceeding would indeed perilously endanger his cherished secret.

But if this man was a foreigner would he not be more likely to leave for his own land? If—as was almost certain—he was a Frenchman, would he not return to France with his prey, and quickly?

It seemed probable, and the marquis determined to proceed to Dover with such hope.

He was too late however for the tidal train of

that day, and had perforce to wait until the morrow.

Arrived at the seaport the marquis lost no time in instituting inquiries as to the appearance of the passengers by the last steamer outwards.

He spent much time and no inconsiderable amount of cash in queries and bribes, and had almost given up the search as hopeless, when he found one of those amphibious loafers so often met with at such places who, having more observant eyes than his mates, had noticed two persons whom the marquis had no difficulty in identifying from the man's description as Eugénie and her companion.

By the next packet the harassed, haggard-looking old nobleman left the English shores.

Had he known that his proposed son-in-law was in the Suncross Pits when the fiery gas claimed its many victims the Marquis D'Aubrión would have carried a heart yet more sorely wrung—a proud spirit then indeed utterly broken.

Meanwhile Georges Grandet had reached Paris and lost no time in putting his business affairs in train.

He had a strong motive to expedition, for he had determined that when all was arranged he would either proceed to England if Hugh Mostyn's expected letter claimed his presence there or, if not, would at all risk return to the vicinity of the Chateau D'Aubrión and watch over Hélène.

The Bourse of course demanded his first attention.

From some political complications in Europe Georges held it to be an excellent time for operating for the rise, and at once made for the Parisian Stock Exchange to put his plans into execution.

He had managed his business greatly to his own satisfaction, and was about to leave the vicinity of the Bourse, when his eye fell upon the figure of a man whose back was towards him but whom nevertheless the Parisian instantly recognised.

It was Jacques Cochart!

The notary was evidently engaged in an animated discussion with another operator on the Stock Exchange, and had evidently not seen his rival.

Georges was not in the least surprised at encountering his uncle's unscrupulous man of business at that place, because he was well aware that the marquis had much to do with the semi-gambling transactions of those who traffic in the national funds; but it instantly occurred to the young man's mind that he had caught Cochart somewhat at a disadvantage, and he resolved to profit by the fact, well knowing that the notary would himself resort to any similar ruse.

Beside this Georges had a strong persuasion that Cochart had been the instigator of the late attempt on his life. Indeed at one time he had fancied that the black, shrouded assassin of the railway carriage might have been the notary himself.

The young man had however dismissed the notion as utterly improbable, and the appearance of the old schemer to-day in his proper person proved irrefragably that the maimed and writhing form which drooped helplessly from the foot-board of the carriage could not have been Jacques Cochart, although it might have been some wretched and unsuccessful tool of his.

The rapid resolve the dandy now formed was that he would endeavour to obtain some knowledge of Cochart's Parisian surroundings.

Passing into the street beyond, the young man looked about for some instrument adapted to play the spy.

"Très bien," he said; "the very thing. Jules will answer the purpose better than anyone else in Paris."

At the corner of the next street stood a ragged, meagre lad of about thirteen, engaged in attentive examination of the delicacies exhibited in the window of a large restaurateur's shop.

The boy was a true type of the gamin, the street Arab of Paris.

Stunted and gaunt in form, with hollow cheeks and pinched face, the result of a constant struggle against poverty, hunger and cold, the boy's bright eyes and acute expression told that the hardship of his lot had no power to either bend his buoyant spirits or dull the sharp intelligence which usually characterises the poor children of large cities.

Jules was an old acquaintance of Georges Grandet.

Lavish of his cash as was the Parisian, he would throw into the embrowned, monkey-looking extended hand of the gamin or of the beggar a silver franc when other men would have reckoned the ten-centime piece an ample dole. It is scarcely necessary to say that the young man was correspondingly appreciated by the class of which we speak and by none more than Jules. In the street Arab's eyes Georges Grandet was a type of all that was noble, generous and brave, and the boy would have devoted himself to his service with the unquestioning obedience of a faithful dog.

By a whistle Georges attracted the lad's attention, and with a few eccentric leaps he was standing before the young man with an irresistibly droll smile of gladness on his face at his patron's return to Paris.

The dandy briefly explained his wishes and gave a graphic word picture of Jacques Cochart.

"It is well, m'sieur," replied Jules. "I know the old curmudgeon well. Tonnère, he once sent me four miles on an errand, and then gave me but a miserable sou. The old hunk! I chucked the bit of bronze in his ugly face and nearly knocked one of his fangs down his throat."

"Ah, you're a nice lad," said Georges, sardonically—"a credit to our fair city of Paris. How do you purpose to reach the galleys and have the magic 'T. F.' neatly printed on your flesh with a red-hot iron? By the road of robbery or murder when you're old enough, I suppose."

The boy's brown face flushed redly at the dandy's badinage.

"By neither, m'sieur," he responded, drawing up his slight frame with a look of injured pride. "Jules is not a thief and will never be a criminal. Ma foi! I may perhaps shoulder a musket at the next revolution behind a barricade, and I may get the pretty letters of which you speak for that; but Jules never steals, m'sieur, and he doesn't mean to do even worse."

"I believe you," said Georges, lightly. "Now for the affair I want you to transact for me. This old man of whom I was speaking—his name is Jacques Cochart—don't forget that—is a bitter foe to me. He would ruin me if he could compass it. He would not scruple to kill me if it could be done with safety. Now I want to ascertain something about his doings while he remains in Paris. I wish to find out where he resides, whom he visits—for I know he has associates or tools among some of the ruffians of the lowest quarter of the city. Now you must act as my scout to track the wily old fox, Jules. Here's some money for you. Wait about till this man leaves the Bourse, follow him then whithersoever he goes—to lodgings, to an hotel, to any rendezvous—and when you find he has retired for the night come to me at my hotel and let me learn the result."

Jules accepted the commission with the utmost alacrity. What! this mean, ugly old man try to injure his handsome young patron! The idea was intolerable, and the boy set about his work with his natural acuteness farther sharpened by a vindictive hate of old Cochart.

When the notary left the resort of "bulls" and "bears" with a grim smirk on his face at having during the interval still farther embarrassed the monetary affairs of the Marquis D'Aubrión he little knew of the espionage of which he was the subject.

Georges Grandet had unquestionably that day secured a point in the game.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

May, let him live, then, till in this life's stead
Even he shall pray for that thou hast to give.
SWINBURNE.

IN the utter blackness of the dayless mine a wretched man cowered in a horrible dread.

Through shafts which led to upper air and through the long convolutions of the many galleries but a few brief moments previously had roared the tremendous reverberation which sounded the death knell of many men.

Yes, many men—honest and true-hearted, who, rude as they might have been in outward seeming and somewhat rough in speech, had held within their breasts true English hearts, and had toiled hard for the support of dear ones at home—had gone to their last account.

Yet this man was spared.

Was he spared because earth could not dispense with him?

Was he saved for the time because he stood pre-eminent among his fellows for his true words, his noble acts?

If it was so why did he not stand upright in the darkness and murmur heartfelt thanks to an Almighty Preserver?

Why did he grovel on the hard, black, rocky floor? Why did he shiver with a craven terror?

Why did he see 'mid the gloom around menacing faces and hear in the air, now so deathly dumb after that terrible clamour, the whisper of accusing voices?

Because he was the son of Cain—a murderer—and his name was Rupert Kesterton!

For a long time he crouched there in that horror of extremest fear until even nature had exhausted her tremor of terror and to acute apprehension succeeded the apathy of despair.

Yet even in this cruel, craven soul, this prostration could not be of long continuance.

The instinct of self-preservation was not extinct.

Hope, the last celestial visitant who clings to mortal man, would not leave even this spotted, wormlike spirit.

He tried to rally his thoughts. He moved first one limb, then another, like some loathsome insect trying what power of evil still remained to it.

He had sustained no injury. His limbs were sound. The pulse to which he applied his shaking forefinger beat equably.

That was well. He lived. But for how long? And he thought, with a deep groan, as the threatening face of James Meers suddenly appeared to rise from the solid blackness, how long would sanity be his in this terrible solitude?

He knew sufficient of coal mines and the casualties incident to them to comprehend the disaster which had taken place. He had now to balance the chances of rescue.

It was sufficiently clear that the gas had not penetrated to all parts of the workings or how had he escaped?

Two considerations immediately followed. Was he the only survivor or not? And had he any possible prospect of escape?

Kesterton did not trouble himself to speculate on the cause of the catastrophe, although it was hardly possible to avoid a slight thrill of fresh horror when the thought flashed across his mind of the open lamp he had hurled away.

He resolved first to investigate the way which led to the shaft.

On his hands and knees and with infinite caution Kesterton picked his path onward in entire darkness.

He had not proceeded many feet when he drew back his hand in a sudden dread.

It had touched the cold face of a corpse!

Kesterton did not doubt that it was his recent companion. He remembered that the man had sprung towards the shaft in the vain hope to recover the lamp. Being thus nearer to the sphere of the destroying vapour, he had either

succumbed to its malign influence or been stricken down by some massy rock.

Passing the body with as little contact as possible, Kesterton continued his difficult way.

With every yard he advanced the progress became more arduous. Larger and larger fragments formed formidable obstacles.

Kesterton's hands were bleeding from the rough surfaces to which he had to cling, his clothes were torn from him, his forehead was bathed with the perspiration of mingled fatigue and fear.

At last the passage became wholly impassable. Some immense masses had fallen from the roof and choked the narrow way fatally.

Cursing his ill fortune, the trembling wretch toiled back, resting frequently for very faintness.

He was aware that a period of insensibility—he could not tell how prolonged—had passed between the time when he threw away the lump and his terrified awakening in the darkness. This interval of oblivion must have been an extensive one, for the hunger pangs which Kesterton felt were not those of ordinary appetite but the craving of starvation.

When the unhappy man had realised this fact he gave himself up for lost. The mine was evidently free from gas, and if long hours had passed and no resolute hands of rescuers made their way to the pit it must be that search was considered hopeless.

With this thought all Kesterton's panic fear returned with redoubled force. He lost all self-control and alternately yelled—prayed—cursed!

He called on Hugh Mostyn, who he thought had escaped, for help—he adjured him piteously by their ties of kindred to come to his aid. He shouted to various miners by name, amongst others to the man whose body he had but lately passed and of whose death he had been the instrument.

That thought came to increase his agony.

It was not that Kesterton felt aught of sorrow for the death and misery he had brought about, but it was because this idea, working in his excited mind and acting upon his enfeebled body, conjured up the old dread visions to people the black vacancy.

Once more the faces of his victims gathered round—the boy soldier so treacherously done to death—James Meers—the dead miner—seemed to frown at him from the dull space, and behind them a shadowy troop whose faces were not recognisable but who wore the pitman's garb.

With his eyes closed tightly to shut out the vision, and shrieking entreaties for mercy, Kesterton crept on the backward path.

When he reached the dead miner a thought struck him which at once dispelled his shadowy tortures.

It had occurred to Kesterton that the miner had a parcel containing several pounds of candles which had been provided for use in the workings free from gas and which he was carrying back.

If it were possible to find them they would enable him to put off starvation perhaps till help came.

Very carefully Kesterton groped about the vicinity of the miner. He was successful in his search at last, the candles having probably been struck from the man's hand were lying at some distance from the body.

The repulsive repast thus furnished to Kesterton banished his late imaginary terrors and put fresh life in him. Not yet would he relinquish hope—he would try the passage in the contrary direction to that which he had of late taken.

His progress in this track was more rapid, both from the fact that the path was not encumbered so greatly and also in part to Kesterton's regained vigour.

At every few yards he would stop and shout loudly, in the hope that his cries might reach the ears of some party of rescuers.

In vain! No answering shouts came back to his straining ears. Nothing save the hollow echo of his own voice as it reverberated through the narrow tunnel.

As Kesterton went on his mind was busy speculating as to probabilities.

He felt certain that the Earl of Thanet would spare no expense or personal trouble to have the pits quickly and thoroughly explored, if such exploration were indeed possible.

It was clear to the imprisoned man that the air was now free from the noxious vapours, which result he thought might be due to the force of the explosion detaching some mighty masses of the roof and thus closing up the workings whence the fatal gas had before issued.

If then the ventilation of the mine was good, why should not rescue be speedy?

Robert Wilmer Kesterton knew would have returned home on the day of the accident, and he did the engineer the justice to acknowledge that he was not likely to be tardy in taking proper measures; and then Hugh—

Kesterton stopped abruptly. Curiously enough, the question of his kinsman's probable escape or possible destruction had not before occurred to him.

Deeply cogitating, he resumed his progress, still occasionally raising his voice in a hoarse cry.

Suddenly Kesterton pulled up even more sharply than before.

Was it possible that he heard an answering hilloa?

He filled his chest and gave vent to a louder shout, then listened hungrily, while his heart seemed to stand still in his breast.

The response came—a faint but perfectly audible cry from the direction in which he was proceeding.

With renewed spirit the man toiled on as quickly as he could make way until his progress was suddenly ended by a rocky barrier which seemed to be the end of the passage.

While Kesterton stopped confounded by this unlooked-for obstacle the cry sounded almost in his very ear:

"Hilloa!"

That voice!

Rupert Kesterton could have no shadow of doubt to whom it belonged.

"True it sounded strangely faint and muffled, but it had the well-known ring of Hugh Mostyn's tones!"

"Who and where are you?" cried Kesterton, to verify the supposition. "Have you got a rescue party?"

"Ha! is that you, Kesterton? Another victim then! I am Hugh Mostyn, imprisoned here, and I fear the solitary survivor of my party."

Kesterton perceived by the direction of the sound that there must be some small aperture towards the roof of inconsiderable size but still sufficiently large to serve as a kind of speaking-tube.

"Curse it!" rejoined Kesterton. "That's confoundedly unlucky. I had almost made sure of rescue. Can we penetrate this barrier?"

"Without tools certainly not."

"Can't you speak a little louder, Mostyn? I can hardly hear you."

"I cannot," replied Hugh. "I have exhausted myself by my shouting to you. I am weak from starvation. And you?"

Kesterton's cunning stood him in good stead. "Oh, yes, of course. So am I. What sort of a place are you in?"

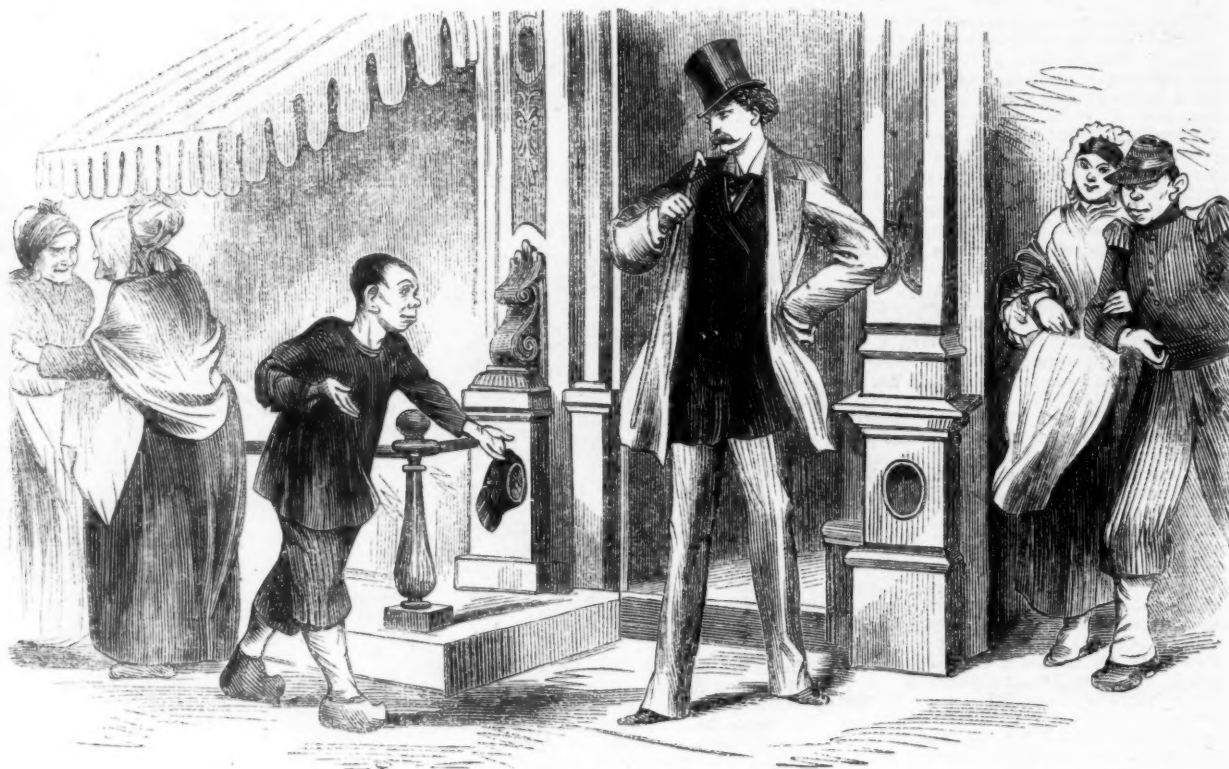
"On a small space near which is a kind of shelving chasm. There were six of us—five men and a boy. Despite my entreaties, one after another they ventured down the slope, as they described it to be when they began their quest. Each in turn has gone—none has returned."

"May they not have escaped?"

"No, for I heard for an hour the dying groans of the last man who left, yet could render him no aid."

"I suppose our last groans too will soon be given," said Kesterton, gloomily. "What hope do you think we have?"

"Our sole chance lies in our endurance. I know well that neither my father nor Robert Wilmer will leave anything undone to search



[THE LITTLE SPT.]

the mine. It is only a question whether they find us living men or emaciated corpses."

"Ha!" exclaimed Kesterton, and lapsed into deep thought.

Despite the terrors of the situation, the heart of the schemer swelled with a sudden elation. By a rapid calculation he satisfied himself that with strict economy he could subsist on the candles for nearly a week.

Surely ere that time elapsed help would come.

Yes, it would come to him! But to his kinsman also?

Ah, no! In all probability Hugh Mostyn would have perished of starvation before the rescuers broke into the dungeon.

Kesterton reached his hand cautiously upwards and found that his fingers touched the passage through which the sound must have come.

A few tiny fragments of coal which he had picked up and crumbled with his fingers rushed downward towards Hugh through the orifice.

"There isn't much between us," said Kesterton.

"Perhaps not up there," replied Hugh, "but below there are at least six feet of solid coal to penetrate—a hopeless task to men utterly without tools."

"You are right," said Kesterton, and again a silence fell between the two men.

Was Rupert considering whether the little cleft afforded means to supply his starving kinsman with some of the coarse nutriment he had secured?

Not at all. He desired to ascertain whether it was practicable to render such aid. He had satisfied himself that it was; but not the slightest intention of depriving himself of even one mouthful of his store flitted through the schemer's mind.

On the contrary, his heart was filled with a new-born, evil hope.

What if this dire catastrophe—his own act and deed—should be the means of ridding him of the man whom of all beings on earth he most hated?

He felt that he could almost be satisfied to endure long hours yet of this frightful captivity in subterranean darkness if he were sure that when the rescuing party at last broke into their dungeon they would have come too late to find Hugh Mostyn a living man.

Nay, now that his hopes had revived—now that his fears had become less overwhelming—the cold-blooded villain felt that he could experience a positive delight in counting his kinsman's expiring groans.

Hugh made no present attempt to renew the conversation.

Probably he did not care to spend his failing energy in converse with one for whom he had so little regard.

Kesterton's meditations thus went on undisturbed, and, as he thought on his resolves, took a darker tone.

His first notion had been that he would simply remain a listener when Hugh succumbed to the destroyer.

But, as the demon which had so often reigned in this man's black soul resumed ascendancy with his strengthening hope, strangely vindictive thoughts flooded his mind.

By and by, when certain Hugh could not live to injure him in the future, he would take revenge for all former slights, he would pour forth his cherished hate by shouting bitter taunts into the dull ears of the dying man.

He would tell Hugh that he should occupy the place which had been his kinsman's; that he would punish those whom the captain had regarded—notably and first Robert Wilmer.

Nay, by a refinement of cruelty he purposed, by an allusion to Cochart's plot, to hurl at Hugh the crowning falsehood that Eugénie herself was in his own power.

But in order to experience this exquisite vengeance upon Hugh Mostyn Kesterton must be certain that no escape was possible to Lord Thanet's son and heir.

Surely it lay in the schemer's own power to ensure this.

A little reflection told him that any entry to them must be made from the end of the working farthest from his kinsman's prison.

Such being the case, did it not rest with himself to stay the rescuers from farther exploration by two assurances—one that the captain had been in another part of the pit when the explosion occurred—the other that he could vouch for no living man being in his vicinity?

To ensure this he would proceed to the end of the passage most distant from Hugh for the present, in order that he might catch the first sound of picks striking on the barriers at the end of the way.

Indeed by this time he had convinced himself of the certainty of rescue.

Before he went, however, he carefully inserted his fingers into the orifice of the wall of coal. He found it large enough to allow his hand to pass up to the large knuckles.

At the slight sound he made Hugh asked in a faint voice what he was doing.

"Nothing, nothing whatever," responded Kesterton, with a ghastly chuckle as he crept away. "I'm going to listen for the coming of our helpers. Keep up your courage. Au revoir, my dear kinsman."

When he reached the other extremity of the passage Kesterton's pockets were filled with fragments of coal, all about the size of a man's fist.

Lying on the floor of the dungeon against the rocky wall which bounded it, Kesterton's employment during the slow hours was a strange one.

Yet he persevered—now in exultant mood and then again crouching and shuddering from ghostly, spectral faces—in mechanically rubbing together two fragments of coal until each assumed the form of a wedge the size of a man's joined fingers.

One of these would form the last little key-stone to seal up Hugh Mostyn's rocky tomb ere any coming explorer could catch the sound of his faint cry!

(To be Continued.)



[THE CASTAWAYS.]

THE LORD OF STRATHMERE; OR, THE HIDDEN CRIME.

CHAPTER XIV.

He whose life with goodness mates
All annals and all times outdates.

THE return of Chandos, with Miss Pelham and the doctor, appeared to be the signal for a general activity.

It seemed to our hero that inclement weather might at any moment be expected, and that a shelter, for the young lady, at least, was absolutely imperative.

The morning was not half spent, and he set to work at once upon his task of constructing a hut.

This task proved more difficult than one would imagine. He had no axe, no hatchet, to cut down the young trees required to serve as posts or uprights, and was obliged to devise a plan for breaking off the saplings as nearly as possible to the ground.

He had scarcely entered upon his operations when the doctor joined him.

Mr. Gray, who detested idleness, lent his assistance.

Mr. Pelham presently offered to help, and, finally, Lord Strathmere, to escape his own reflections, began to assist with an energy that showed him an efficient coadjutor.

The saplings were pulled over by united effort until they lay nearly prostrate upon the ground, and were, consequently, broken short off.

In every case, Chandos's knife finally severed the connection with the roots and trimmed them into shape.

Miss Pelham selected a site for the proposed hut, at a brief distance from the beach, and in the shelter of a group of pine trees.

The ground was carpeted with the slender pine-needles, and the salt air was fragrant with the delightful balsamic odour.

Chandos proved himself no model architect. With his slender materials he could not construct a picturesque cottage, even had he possessed the skill to do so, but he did manage to build a snug little hut, tent-shaped, after the fashion of the American Indian wigwam, and he planted this so securely upon the ground, under the protection of the pines, that it was not likely to be affected even by a gale. An opening was left to serve as a door.

The building required the united efforts of the five men during the entire day, with the exception of an hour at noon.

During the intermission of labour, Chandos made a fire, dressed his fish, wrapt them in leaves, and buried them in hot ashes to bake. He found some penguins' eggs, and bestowed these similarly.

The roots the doctor had gathered were objects of general distrust. No one liked to be the first to try them, not knowing their name or nature, and they were quietly set aside.

Chandos was very like his old self while busy at his manifold tasks.

In former days, when he owned a yacht, he had sailed among the islands of Western Scotland, and had often "camped out" with his friends, and cooked the game he had shot.

Those old days seemed to have returned to him.

He found it easy to imagine that he and his companions were members of a gay yachting party, and that the cooking and the hut-building were parts of a general and delightful frolic.

By sunset the hut was finished. There was no door; neither was there a window.

The roof was formed of branches covered with leaves.

A heap of pine-needles and pine branches

served as a couch, and on this was laid the woollen blanket that had been brought in the boat.

Miss Pelham thanked her zealous friends, and took possession of her dwelling with apparent delight.

Lord Strathmere flung himself down to rest, fully persuaded that he had earned a right to the girl's admiration and undying gratitude.

The doctor and Chandos went in quest of food.

They returned with penguins' eggs and with a sufficient supply of seal-meat to last a day or two.

These were cooked as before. After supper, they walked upon the sands, with the exception of Chandos.

He felt that he was apart from the others, and he strolled away moodily, followed by the wistful glance of Miss Pelham.

Night fell again upon the lonely rock in the far southern sea, a night with mellow stars and waning moon.

The little company sat upon the beach in the bright night-light, and talked of home and kindred in far-off England.

At a late hour, Miss Pelham retired to her hut and went to sleep.

There was no need of a sentinel to guard the little camp.

The sea shut them in as closely as iron bars. One by one the party dwindled away, until Chandos was left alone.

He walked to a spot remote from the camp, and stretched himself upon the beach in the midst of a profound and dusky solitude, and so slept.

The next day was a busy one for him and Mr. Gray, who chose to join him.

They remained from early morning until night at the breeding-ground of the seals upon the western side of the island, succeeding in killing a dozen fine animals.

The skins were removed and placed to dry. Chandos improvised a method of curing them, and put it in practice.

Care had been taken not to destroy seal-mothers, and to use as little cruelty as possible.

The sinews were extracted for fishing-lines, and even the bones were utilised for various purposes.

Chandos procured several fish, as a finish to his day's work, and with these, and the livers of the seals—an Esquimaux dainty—they returned to the camp.

Miss Pelham's face brightened at Chandos's approach.

The day had been very long to her. Her father had been silent and gloomy, and Lord Strathmore had displayed toward her the attentiveness and devotion of a lover.

If she walked, he was at her side. If she sat still, he was near her.

He complimented her upon her bravery, her courage, her cheerfulness, and, to rid herself from him, she had at last retired to her hut.

A fire was kindled, and the fish and meat were cooked.

"There is getting to be a remarkable sameness about this food," remarked Lord Strathmore. "We need salt—"

"We shall have it to-morrow," said Chandos.

"Indeed! Have you found a salt-mine?" asked the baron, arching his brows.

"We will evaporate sea-water," answered Chandos, quietly. "It can be very easily done."

"Since you are so fertile in resources," said the baron, with a little sneer, "you might give us a change of diet."

"I will see what can be done," was the reply.

"We have not yet explored the island. I intend to do so to-morrow."

"I will join you," said Mr. Gray.

"And I," said Lord Strathmore. "We may discover something. Not people, of course, but food."

The next morning, when Miss Pelham emerged from her hut, she found her companions grouped about a fire upon which water-fowl were broiling.

A small supply of salt had been obtained by boiling sea water in the tin cup, and the breakfast proved excellent and of fine flavour.

"Where did these come from, papa?" she asked, as she was served with a choice morsel.

"Chandos snared or trapped them, before we were any of us awake," replied the banker.

"When he gets out at Australia he must be appointed prison cook or some such thing," said Lord Strathmore, with a coarse little laugh. "His genius lies in foraging and purveying and cooking."

Miss Pelham flushed, but Chandos did not seem to notice his kinsman's speech.

"This is the only decent meal we have had," said Mr. Gray. "We may not have many such. When the weather gets colder the water-fowl may fly to warmer regions. We have enough cooked to last all day. Chandos thinks we should be careful of our supply of matches."

After breakfast, the food that had been cooked was divided, our hero and Mr. Gray taking the smaller portion and setting out upon their tour of the island.

They were absent until late in the afternoon, having made a complete tour. They brought back with them some tubers, resembling potatoes, several fish, and a variety of mussel that promised to be excellent as food.

They had found a few coarse shells also, into which they had put some of their acquisitions, and which they had intended to use as dishes.

"No danger of starvation," said Chandos, cheerfully, displaying his trophies.

"Plenty here would be starvation in England," said Mr. Pelham, whose formerly round and rosy face had lost much in outline and fresh colouring. "And to think of this round over and over, month after month, year after year, seal and penguin, penguin and seal, water-fowl and fish, for ever and always—I'd rather be in an English workhouse—I had, indeed."

Nevertheless, he did justice to the supper which was presently prepared.

"What is the programme for to-morrow,

Chandos?" asked Mr. Gray, deferring to our hero as to a superior, in spite of his contempt for him as a convict.

Chandos looked at the faces around him. They were all wan and pale and haggard.

Upon one face alone, that of Gerda, could he trace any expression akin to resignation or contentment.

He would have been willing to spend the remainder of his blighted life here, but he was too unselfish not to prefer others to himself.

He said, quietly:

"To-morrow I shall climb the peak and plant a signal of distress upon its summit. Such a signal might probably attract the attention of some vessel blown out of her course."

Mr. Pelham brightened with momentary hope.

"I will go with you, Chandos," said Mr. Gray.

The next morning, soon after daybreak, with a supply of cooked provisions, Chandos and Gray proceeded into the interior of the island and commenced their ascent of the peak.

It was past mid-day when they reached the summit and sat down to rest.

The air was cold, and there was snow all around them.

Immense fissures traversed the peak, yawning before and around them like open graves. A misstep would hurl them to destruction.

In the intensely rarefied air it seemed as if the blood would gush from eyes, ears and nostrils.

A magnificent view of the vast and seemingly limitless sea was spread before their gaze.

Far as the eye could reach, in every direction, lay the illimitable expanse of glittering waters. And nowhere upon it could a sail be seen, or any sign of human life.

Chandos thrilled at the sight. It appealed to his sense of awe, as well as to his admiration. But having satisfied himself in one long, sweeping gaze, he planted the staff he had brought firmly in a crevice in the rock, after tying securely to it a piece of spare sail.

"Our duty is done," he said. "The signal may attract help, or it may flutter until it is torn to shreds in the wind. We may as well descend."

They did not linger upon the pinnacle, commencing the descent at once. It was dusk when they re-entered the camp, weary and footsore.

The doctor had prepared supper for them. Their signal had been seen from below and approved.

Miss Pelham announced that she had named their refuge Pinnacle Island. A pleasant hour followed.

The next day the sky looked threatening. An east wind blew heavily, and rain was expected.

Everyone turned in to build a shelter for the men, a hut larger than that of Miss Pelham, which was to serve as a general barracks. It was near her dwelling, and also among the pines.

The rain held off, fortunately, for two or three days, although the weather grew more and more lowering with every hour.

The hut was finished on the day in which it had been begun. The boat was brought up upon the beach out of the possible reach of encroaching waves.

A supply of food sufficient to last a week was procured. And, finally, Chandos paid a visit to the seal breeding-ground, found his skins cured, and brought them away in two immense loads.

"What are these for?" asked the baron, contemptuously, eying them. "Are we to make them into robes à la Robinson Crusoe?"

"They are to cover our huts and shelter us from the rain."

Chandos exemplified his idea by completely covering Miss Pelham's hut with overlapping seal-skins, the fur side downward.

A skin, with the fur turned in towards the

room, was suspended to the opening in the side of the hut, serving as a door.

There was no unpleasant odour from the skins, and they promised to fulfil the end for which they had been prepared.

The other hut was similarly covered.

The morning after the completion of these preparations, the long-delayed storm broke upon the island in a tempestuous fury.

Miss Pelham was unable to leave her hut. Trees cracked like pipe stems all around them in the grove, and fell with the sound of artillery.

The waves were whirled high up upon the beach, roaring and groaning in agony. The sea seemed in the throes of an awful anguish.

The storm raged three days without cessation. Those three days were full of the supremest discomfort and apprehension.

Mr. Pelham crept on his hands and knees to his daughter's hut, and remained with her. Chandos brought them food at proper intervals. When the gale had spent its force, and the furious winds had died out, a cold rain, intermixed with sleet, descended upon the scene, and for a week the sky seemed to weep unceasingly. The provisions became low. The general discomfort had now become utter dreariness and despair.

More food must be obtained, and Chandos turned out to secure it.

As he emerged from the men's hut, a wild scene of chaos and confusion presented itself to his gaze.

The beach was furrowed and hollowed by the recent gales, and pools of water dotted its surface.

Trees lay about everywhere. The boat was safe. Dead birds lay on the sands, but not a living creature was visible.

He penetrated into the grove, and crossed to the seals' breeding-ground.

The animals were seen on the rocks, and he approached them in the driving rain, club in hand, and killed one by a dextrous blow upon the nose.

Securing a large piece of flesh, he returned to the camp. No dry wood was anywhere to be seen.

As he made his way along the shore, he glanced up at the pinnacle.

His signal was gone!

The next moment he came to a stand-still, gazing seaward with a wild and startled gaze.

Through the mist of rain his keen eyes detected the outline of a ship drifting past the island, looking spectral and unreal in the dimness.

He recognised the vessel, more by instinct than by her vague outline.

"The 'Clytemnestra'!" he said to himself.

"She is cruising about in search of us. Her men see no harbour, or they are going on to the southward purposely. Can it be they don't see this island? They are on our track. If they don't stop to-night, they'll return to-morrow or the next day, and we shall be waiting for them—waiting like rats in a trap!"

CHAPTER XV.

The very sun had mocked me
When it rose that day to shine.

THE operation of making a fire in the rain proved difficult, but not insurmountable. Chandos found a comparatively sheltered spot under an over-hanging rock, and brought here a supply of branches, which he discovered in hollows of the grove.

The supply of matches was running short, and it required two or three to kindle the damp wood he had gathered into a sickly blaze. The spectral-looking ship had passed out of sight in the mist, and he did not believe that her return would be immediate, as the wind was blowing from the northward.

He cooked the breakfast and carried a portion of it to Miss Pelham's hut.

Her father was still with her, and received it at the door.

He took the remainder to the men's hut, and joined with the others in its consumption.

Not until the meal was concluded did he in-

form his companions of the proximity of the "Clytemnestra."

His announcement produced dismay, excitement and consternation.

Lord Strathmere was full of exclamations; Mr. Gray offered many suggestions; but, as usual, it was to Ralph Chandos that all turned for direction.

His bravery, his unselfishness, his cool, prompt fertility of resource, his marked ability, made him a natural leader of men, and Mr. Gray, who despised him for his supposed wickedness, and for being a convict, turned to him in their despair for guidance, under the hypocritical pretence of merely asking his opinion.

"I think," said Chandos, "that the ship will not return under some hours. The rain is ceasing, but the wind is rising. This island is so encompassed by reefs that the ship will not dare to stand in too close to us until the wind changes."

"And that may not be for days," said Mr. Gray.

"The interval, whether longer or shorter, is all that remains to us of safety," said the doctor. "The convicts will pounce upon us, sooner or later, and we can do nothing to help ourselves."

"The convicts will kill all of us," said Lord Strathmere, with a shudder. "Good heavens! Chandos, can't you think of any way of escape? You are always so ready with suggestions—have you none to offer now?"

"Yes, said Chandos, "I have a suggestion to offer. This island is barren and desolate. Snow will soon fall and render our existence here intolerable—in case our enemies spare our lives. I propose that we take again to the boat and the high seas."

His companions looked at each other blankly, and in dead silence.

"I thought the matter over while I cooked the breakfast," continued our hero. "We can fill our kegs with fresh water. We can cook a supply of food sufficient for a month's voyage. When the wind changes we can slip out of our little harbour at night, and sail to the northward. In any event, we shall be no worse off at sea than here, and the chances are that we may be picked up by some vessel. As we are now, we are like rats in a trap. If we wait here too long, the convicts will seize us, and put us to death. Our only hope is in flight."

The idea was startling to Chandos's companions. Their recent sufferings on the small boat were yet fresh in their minds, but the choice was between two great evils, and they naturally chose the lesser.

"We will go," said the doctor, "Nothing can be worse for us than to remain here."

"True," said the baron, gloomily. "It may be well that we are driven out of this refuge, for no help could ever reach us here. The sooner we are off the better."

"We must obtain our supply of food at once," said Chandos. "You must all contribute assistance. We have a few hours of safety; let us employ it to the best advantage. Mr. Gray and I will kill seals and cut up the meat for cooking. Lord Strathmere will hunt penguins' eggs for roasting, and help fill the kegs with water. The doctor and Mr. Pelham might officiate as cooks. By night, everything should be in readiness for our start."

The programme met with favour, and was entered upon at once. The rain was still falling, but in a thin mist, a fine drizzle, that promised a speedy termination.

The sky was clearing; the wind was increasing. Chandos and Mr. Gray went over to the western shore of the island, and entered upon their work of killing seals.

Lord Strathmere devoted himself to the task assigned him. The doctor employed his energies in collecting wood, as nearly dry as possible, and in great quantity.

Hearing the sounds of activity, Mr. Pelham came forth from his daughter's hut.

The doctor informed him of the situation of affairs, and pressed him into service.

About noon the rain entirely ceased, and the

sky cleared, a few sickly rays of sunshine making their appearance.

The wind still blew steadily from the northward, to the great joy of those upon the island.

Miss Pelham came out to the fire, which was now blazing brightly, and her father informed her of their renewed danger at the hands of the convicts.

She bore the news bravely, and approved of the resolution to take to flight.

Lord Strathmere succeeded in obtaining a large number of penguins' eggs, which were roasted in hot ashes.

The kegs were filled with fresh water, and duly stored in the boat.

A little after noon, Mr. Gray entered the camp, loaded with choice pieces of seal-meat, and those were put to roast upon the fire.

Some two or three hours later, Chandos made his appearance, bearing also pieces of seal, a string of fine fish, and a bundle of roots.

These were all cooked upon the coals, or in the hot ashes, the fish being first wrapped in leaves.

The "Clytemnestra" was nowhere in sight, but the wind was shifting to the opposite point of the compass, and her return could not long be delayed.

"We are all ready for the voyage," said Chandos, when supper had been eaten, and the food all cooked, had been stowed in the boat's lockers. "We will have a favourable wind. Darkness will soon fall. We had better take advantage of its earliest shadows to escape."

Every one was feverishly eager to depart. The darkness presently gathered over the lonely isle and the vast surrounding sea.

Everything was in readiness for departure; Miss Pelham was helped into the boat; her father, the doctor and the baron entered; Mr. Gray came next; Chandos pushed off the little craft and sprang in at the last moment, giving her an impetus that sent her shooting upon the water.

Mr. Gray and Chandos rowed out of the little harbour into the sea beyond. The "Clytemnestra" was not in sight.

In truth, she was ten miles to the southward, slowly beating her way back to the island, yet afraid to venture too near its outlying reefs in the night.

The convicts on board the ship were in fine spirits.

The had been chagrined and troubled at the escape of the passengers of the ship, and deemed the death of the fugitives necessary to their own safety and well-being.

Parson Jim was exultant in the prospect of taking Miss Pelham captive, and now walked the deck in triumph.

"We can't approach too near the island to-night," he said to one of his allies, "on account of the ugly breakers, but in the morning we'll lower two of the boats, and swoop down upon them like a tornado. They're on the island, sure enough. The wind must have brought them straight to it. We haven't cruised all this time in search of them for nothing."

"But they may not be on the island, after all," suggested his ally. "We hain't seen nothing of no one."

"Just wait till morning, and you'll see something then. I know they are there. We'll find them waiting for us in the morning, the Lord Governor-General, our fellow convict, blight him! and all, including Miss Pelham, the sweet little beauty," declared Parson Jim. "We'll kill the men. You all understand that, you know. They're all waiting for us, and they'll see us in the morning."

When morning dawned upon the waters, the ship was about five miles distant from the island.

The wind had veered to the southward and was blowing steadily.

The vessel stood in for the island, guided by the tall peak.

Arrived as near to the reefs as prudence would permit, the ship came to anchor, and two boats were lowered.

Parson Jim and a dozen fellow-convicts, armed to the teeth, sprang into the first of these, and pulled for the little harbour.

The second boat was filled, and followed swiftly.

Parson Jim was the first to spring out upon the beach.

He did not notice the absence of the fugitives' boat, his eyes being rivetted upon the huts and the remains of the previous day's extensive fires.

"There's proof of their presence here," he exclaimed. "They've retreated to the huts. Come on, boys! Let's drag 'em out!"

Investigation proved that the huts were deserted.

"They've gone to some other part of the island," cried Parson Jim, disappointedly. "We'll scour the whole place, if necessary. Their boat may be on the other side. Let's look for it."

Half a day was spent in searching the island. At a late hour of the afternoon Parson Jim and his confederates came to the conclusion that the fugitives had taken to their boat and were adrift.

"We will soon run them down," declared the leader of the convicts. "They can't escape us. We must get back to the ship and pursue them."

They returned to the vessel and set out in swift pursuit.

Meantime, the small boat had had a night and the larger share of the day in advance of the pursuer.

The wind had changed once or twice, and the boat, under her fullest spread of canvas, had skimmed the waters like a duck.

We need not dwell upon the small incidents of this second voyage. The little boat flew on to the northward and eastward, impelled by a strong wind, and day after day passed and nothing was seen of the pursuing ship.

There was no storm to threaten them with sudden death. The days were pleasant and full of sunshine; the nights were full of mellow starlight.

A week passed and yet no sail was seen. The horrible monotony wore upon the fugitives. They were silent and depressed.

As upon the previous voyage, Chandos was the leading spirit of the company. He had compelled the respect of even Mr. Gray, and consequently Lord Strathmere hated him more than ever with a deadly and terrible hatred.

He had succeeded in his machinations against his innocent cousin, had stripped him of home, friends, wealth, rank, and position; had made him a convict sentenced to hard labour for life, and yet, in spite of all, Chandos's natural nobility of character rose triumphant over all misfortune, and compelled the respect of people who would fain have treated him with contempt.

A second week followed the first, and still no sail was visible.

It appeared to the voyagers that they were alone in a great water-world—the sole living denizens of a trackless, limitless waste—and that they must sail on, the sport of the winds and the waves, until starvation or some merciful storm should bring them a rest in the great deep.

The skies seemed to mock them with a brazen sun by day, and pitiless, cold starshine by night.

The wind seemed to moan a dirge, and the glassy, treacherous sea seemed always yawning as their grave.

Sharks followed their frail craft day after day, until the least superstitious person on board became infected with expectation of death.

Day after day, the Death-angel appeared to hover over the boat, as in expectation of prey, and so the third week wore on to its end.

Three weeks of death in life, of terrible monotony, of brooding over their fate.

Lord Strathmere sat sullen and troubled through the long days, yet arousing himself, now and then, to proffer such small courtesies to Miss Pelham as resources permitted.

Chandos was grave and thoughtful, always on the lookout, brave and unselfish as ever, finding relief from his thoughts in hardest work.

Miss Pelham was the soul of the little company. With tender womanliness and devotion, she cheered her companions.

She sang to them; she told stories. She forgot her own anxieties in combating theirs. She proved herself noble, brave and sweet, a very heroine, and her father was comforted, thinking that she did not realise the horrors of the situation.

Both Lord Strathmere and Chandos knew better than this, and both felt their love for the girl increase to an overwhelming passion.

With the aid of a blanket some little privacy had been arranged for the young lady, as upon the previous voyage.

Small as was this place of retirement, it was seldom infringed upon, and it was when Miss Pelham had retired to this comparative seclusion and was asleep that her companions in misfortune ventured to talk to each other with any shade of freedom of their desperate situation.

"Three weeks at sea since leaving Pinnacle Island," said Lord Strathmere, one night, when Miss Pelham had fallen asleep. "How do the provisions hold out, Chandos?"

"Getting low," was the laconic response.

"Another week will see us reduced to starvation," said Mr. Gray.

"Or to the hideous alternative suggested on our voyage to Pinnacle Island," remarked the baron, grimly. "Day after day no sail. I begin to think that we are doomed."

"It is because we have a Jonah on board," said Mr. Gray, with a return of his earlier aversion to our hero, and with a grim look at Chandos.

The baron shuddered.

If he had been inclined to superstition, he might have entertained the same idea; but he knew that the "Jonah on board" was himself, and no other.

"It seems to me," said the doctor, dependently, "that we are doomed to sail on for ever, like the 'Flying Dutchman.' I am beginning to give up all hope."

"We shall die, one by one," said Mr. Pelham. "Pray Heaven that the weakest may go first," and he glanced in the direction of his daughter. "I could not bear that my child should survive me."

Chandos looked upward at the mocking stars. He was willing to die.

Life held for him only disgrace, humiliation, sorrow, and agony, he thought.

If he in his infinite mercy would let him die now, he would be grateful.

But even he shuddered at the possibility of Gerda's death.

She, in her bright young beauty, to perish by starvation—the thought was too horrible—he could not bear it.

The men became again silent, gloomy, and thoughtful.

The old doctor, his face thin and wan in the faint light, his long, grey hair dishevelled, was the first to drop asleep.

Mr. Pelham next slumbered. Lord Strathmere sat awake until midnight.

His swarthy face was gaunt and grim; his black eyes, looking unusually large, burned like lamps in their cavernous sockets; his thin lips were bloodless and tightly closed. He was hungry, as were all on board.

The pangs of starvation were necessary to reconcile them to their hard fate. Their cooked meat was distasteful and strong of odour, and its repetition, day after day, without change, had become intolerable.

It was Mr. Gray's watch during the earlier half of the night.

Chandos threw himself in the bottom of the boat and went to sleep.

The gleam of starlight fell upon his noble, clear-cut features, worn and haggard with mental pain; but there was a grim patience, a strange sternness stamped upon that half-laughing face that indicated a strength and endurance of soul, for which Lord Strathmere had never given him credit.

"Blight him!" thought the baron. "He is a

convict, sentenced to hard labour for life, and yet he does not look crushed. It is impossible to crush him, I believe. I wish he was dead. If this starvation continues much longer he will be the first to die. And if he lives, if we ever get to Australia he shall be driven to suicide—a million curses on him!"

With pleasant thoughts like these the baron fell asleep.

At midnight Mr. Gray awakened our hero and took his place in the bottom of the boat, while Chandos remained in charge.

Hour after hour the young man sat at his post, sleepless and vigilant, with strange thoughts crowding upon his mind. It seemed to him that a change was at hand.

Whether the change would be wrought by death or circumstance, he did not attempt to surmise.

His keen, steel-blue eyes swept the watery waste in frequent glances. He fancied he could see the sharks in close pursuit, still hungrily gaping for their prey.

But otherwise there was no sign of life upon the restless, white-capped sea, beside their own boat.

Hour after hour passed. The air grew colder. The hour that precedes the dawn was dark and gloomy.

The boat sped on before the wind, Chandos's hand resting lightly on the helm. With the first gleam of the new day he resumed his searching gaze at the horizon.

His companions slept later than usual upon this morning. When they awakened the sun was shining.

Something of its brightness seemed transferred to Chandos's face. He stood upright, and was gazing to the westward with flaming eyes. They stared at him, amazed.

"What's up?" asked Lord Strathmere.

"Have you gone mad, Chandos?"

Our hero silently pointed towards the west.

Their eyes turned in the direction indicated.

A sail was seen distinctly against the horizon—a white and glimmering sail that each one feared was but the phantasm of fevered brains.

"A sail!" said Mr. Pelham, hollowly. "The 'Clytemnestra!'"

"Impossible!" replied Chandos, finding voice.

"We are rid of her for ever!"

"How shall we signal her?" cried the baron, eagerly.

"She cannot help seeing our sail," said Chandos. "We are directly in her course. Her lookout must soon discover us."

Mr. Pelham sank down and sobbed like a child.

Gerda turned from the ship to look at her unfortunate lover.

The brightness had faded from his face; the sternness had deepened in every line and feature. He was very pale, and the girl knew of what he was thinking.

Rescue from death meant for him a death in life. She drew nearer to him unobserved in the general excitement, and slipped her hand in his.

"It will be all right, Ralph," she whispered, lovingly. "Trust in Him, my poor boy, and in me."

With a steady hand upon the tiller Ralph Chandos guided the little craft toward the rescue that was his doom.

His companions, with the exception of Gerda, who kept close beside him, stood upon the seats and waved their hands in half-delirious excitement.

"Will she see us?" groaned Mr. Pelham. "How swiftly she bears down upon us! Oh, will she pass us by?"

The question was presently answered, and in the negative. A sudden stir upon the deck of the ship, a sudden thronging forward of the crew, showed that the small boat had been seen. The long agony was over. Help and rescue had come!

(To be Continued.)

THE Earl of Pembroke has sent £1,000 to the Turkish Compassionate Fund.

HOW GAS WAS FIRST USED.

GREAT was the amazement of all England when, at the close of the last century, William Murdock discovered the use of combustible air, or gas. So little was the invention understood and believed in by those who had not seen it in use, that even great and wise men laughed at the idea.

"How could there be light without a wick?" said a Member of Parliament when the subject was brought before the House. Even Sir Humphrey Davy ridiculed the idea of lighting towns by gas, and asked one of the proprietors if they meant to take the dome of St. Paul's for a gas meter.

Sir Walter Scott, too, made himself merry over the idea of illuminating London by smoke, though he was glad enough, not so long after, to make his own house at Abbotsford light and cheerful on wintry nights by the use of that very smoke. When the House of Commons was lighted by gas the architect imagined that the gas ran on fire through the pipes, and therefore he insisted on their being placed several inches from the wall, for fear of the building taking fire. The Members might be observed carefully touching the pipes with their gloved hands, and wondering why they did not feel warm.

The first shop lighted in London by the new method was Mr. Ackerman's, in the Strand, in 1810; and one lady of rank was so delighted with the brilliancy of the gas lamp on the counter that she asked to be allowed to take it home in her carriage.

HOPE AND PATIENTLY WAIT.

THERE is one thing harder than hard work to attain any desired good, and that is to patiently wait for it, after we have done our best. How often we feel what a luxury it would be, just to skip the intervening weeks, or months, maybe, and sit down at the goal. While we are working, the waiting seems very tolerable, but when all has been done, that is in our power, how slowly the hours drag.

One remedy for this trouble is to have plenty of "irons in the fire." Have more than one set of plans on foot, some of which shall be constantly maturing. These will absorb your interest, and help to keep you cheerful while you are looking forward hopefully to the next project. The busy lives are usually the happiest. They have not time for fretting, and doubting, and fearing.

"There is nothing that succeeds like success," and nothing gives us so much cheer as to have a plan succeed. But over and above all the other helps to make waiting tolerable, is an abiding trust in the strong arm that guides the world.

We save ourselves a world of anxious care by believing literally "that the very hairs of your head are all numbered." By remembering that "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Our plans will mature just as rapidly as He wills. We can but do our best, and leave the rest with Him. A submissive, filial spirit is the only one which He will bless, and it is only in that way we shall find lasting peace amidst the world's disappointments and trials. M.

TRUE CHARITY.

"MAMMA," said little Charlotte, "I wish you would give me a penny to give to that poor boy at the gate. He looks very hungry, and says that he has not had a bit to eat all day. I am sorry for him. Do let me give him a penny to buy a roll."

"I thought you had a penny of your own, Charlotte, that your papa gave you this morning. He gave you and Harry a penny each."

"Yes, mamma, but I want mine to buy a cake while I am out."

"Do you think you will be hungry when you are out, my dear?"

"I don't know, mamma."

"If you think so you may take a piece of bread and butter with you."

"But I like a cake best, mamma."

"I am afraid, Charlotte, you are not very sorry for that poor boy, since you would rather let him go away hungry than give up the pleasure of eating a cake, although you have had a good breakfast, and he has had none."

Just at this moment Harry came up to the gate.

The boy was standing there, begging still.

"Here, poor boy," said Harry, "here is a penny for you. I was going to buy a cake with it, but I am not hungry, and you are, so you may have the penny."

The boy thanked Harry, and ran over the way to the baker's to buy a penny roll, which he began to eat with joyful countenance.

Harry went away bowling his hoop, and thinking no more about the penny or the beggar boy, while Charlotte hung down her head and looked ashamed.

It is very easy to say we pity the misfortunes of others, but if we will not make a little sacrifice to relieve them our pity is of no value, for it is not sincere.

Charlotte was not unkind, but she was selfish.

She would have felt glad to have given a penny to that boy if she could have done so without depriving herself of something that she liked. But she did not like to give up her own enjoyment for the sake of another. We cannot call such people charitable.

True charity is to give away what we can spare when we see that it will benefit another person.

Harry was as fond of cakes as Charlotte was, but he thought it would be much better for a boy who was hungry to have a piece of bread than for one who was not hungry to have a cake.

This was real feeling. This was true charity.

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

In the shadow that fell from the parted curtains, Alex could not make out the features of the watcher; but she knew by instinct that it was her father.

Horror and fear for a moment held her motionless, as if paralysed.

Then she withdrew her gaze by a great effort and glanced at Lady Markham.

The baronet's widow had momentarily forgotten Alex and was watching the group at the far end of the room, of which Lord Kingscourt was a member.

A glance around her convinced Alex that no one had seen the watcher save herself.

She drew a long sigh of relief.

He might, however, be discovered at any moment.

She must hasten to him and withdraw him from his perilous position.

She dared not cross the floor to the hall, lest she should attract attention.

Taking advantage of Lady Markham's preoccupation, she arose swiftly and glided toward the window.

Her father started as she came near, recognised her, and retreated from the window.

Alex gained the recess, saw that no one had noticed her, and drew the full satin curtains together, completely hiding herself from the view of anyone in the room.

The she softly undid the fastenings, pushed up the sash, and sprang lightly out into the shrubby beneath.

She could see nothing in the outer gloom after the brilliant light within.

She drew down the sash behind her, and called softly:

"Papa! papa!"

Her father's voice answered her in a whisper. He was close at hand.

Alex groped her way to him.

"Come down upon the cliff," she whispered.

"We shall be safer there?"

Her father drew her arm in his in silence, and they hurried across the lawn in the direction of the sea.

They reached a nook among the rocks, and Alex in a low voice reproached her father for his imprudence.

"But I am disguised," he answered. "I do not see how you recognised me, Alex."

"I knew it must be you, although I could not make out your features. It is too dark for me to notice your disguise, yet let me look!"

She drew his face near her own. In the pale gleam of the few faint stars, she saw that he looked changed, but wherein the change consisted she could not perceive.

"I have stained my complexion to a swarthy darkness," said Mr. Strange. "And I have died my hair and beard black. You would not know me in broad daylight, Alex."

"I would know your eyes anywhere. You cannot change their deep-blue colour. They must look incongruous with your black hair and swarthy complexion, papa, and the incongruity must attract attention."

"I wear spectacles to hide them," interrupted her father, hastily. "The disguise is perfect."

"But your look through the window, papa, the expression of your face, would bring suspicion upon you! What if anyone but I had seen you?"

"In the agony of the moment I forgot myself and everything else," said Mr. Strange. "Oh, Alex, how beautiful she is! She had only the promise of that wonderful beauty eighteen years ago. She was a shy, timid, beautiful girl—now she is a radiant queen, and as far above me as the stars are above the earth!"

"Papa! Dear papa!"

"I saw her look up into the face of Rowland Ingestre with a smile I would die to win from her," groaned the outcast and divorced husband. "And he looked upon her with the eyes of a lover. My lost wife! I never realised until now how I love her."

He stood up and faced the sea with a wild and desolate visage, his eyes full of misery too great for words.

A great sob was wrung from his breast as he continued:

"Have I not suffered? And for what? Whose sin have I been called upon to expiate? Whose is the crime that has made me an outcast, divorced my wife from me, and put me under ban, with a price upon my head? Whoever the real murderer is, may Heaven's blight fall upon him! May—"

Alex clung to her father in affright.

Never before had she seen him in a mood like this.

He had always exercised such stern self-repression that she could scarcely realise that this defiant, wild, and tortured soul was his.

Her tears and entreaties restored him to himself.

"My poor little girl," he muttered, caressing her. "You are between two fires. I know how your heart must be torn. Heaven forgive me for making your burden heavier!"

Alex drew him down to a seat beside her.

"Tell me all about it, papa," she urged, to divert his mind from his lost wife. "Did you go up to London the next morning after you were here before?"

"Yes, I took the early train from Mount Heron. No one recognised me, or paid particular attention to me. I went up to London and found lodgings in a house in Leicester Square, losing myself among a crowd of poor foreigners of nearly every nation in Europe. I am sure that I attracted no attention among them more than any one of them. I have remained in my lodgings closely, giving myself out as an invalid. I left London last night, and arrived at Penzance this morning. I came on to Mount Heron this evening, arriving at Clyffebourne an hour ago."

"I feared you would be at Mount Heron castle

to-night, and that I should not see you. I have something of the utmost importance to tell you. My resemblance to you put Pierre Renaud upon your track, papa. The man you saw in Greece was Jean Renaud."

"How do you know?" cried Mr. Strange, hastily.

Alex replied by detailing to her father an account of her visit to the ruined chapel of the castle, the intrusion of the brothers Renaud, and their conversation concerning her father and herself which she had overheard.

"I know that this Pierre Renaud must have set detectives upon your track, papa," she continued. "He is a bold, bad man. He knows of your existence, and is bent upon your capture. Oh, if you would only leave England—"

"I should be no safer in France, or Germany, or Italy. If I should take passage to South America, now that the bloodhounds are upon my track, I should no doubt be arrested at the moment of sailing," said Mr. Strange, bitterly. "I have entered the lion's den, Alex, and the prospect of escape is dubious."

Alex went on to tell of Renaud's scheme against herself, and its frustration. Her father shuddered.

"I believe with you, Alex," he said, at last, "that Renaud is actually the murderer of your uncle. But how to prove his guilt? We cannot do it."

"It is a great step to have fixed in our own minds upon the guilty one," said Alex. "The rest will come if I watch and wait, papa."

"But how can I leave you at the castle exposed to the machinations of that villain?" groaned Mr. Strange.

"I am on my guard, papa. His enmity to me is not the greatest of my troubles. My anxiety for you absorbs nearly all my thoughts. And next comes Lady Vivian."

"Her marriage?"

"Not altogether her marriage. She had grown to love me, papa, and I loved her. Lady Markham, her chaperone, saw my parting with you when you were here, and hurried me into Lady Vivian's presence, accusing me of being an adventurer, and of having met some designing person in the grounds. Lady Vivian demanded my confidence, and I could not give it. She was displeased, and permitted me to go to Mrs. Ingestre, at the castle, and has not asked me to return. It was very hard to feel her displeasure and to know how appearances were against me. I have lost her," and the girl drew her breath sharply. "She will never love me again, nor trust me."

"I fear it has all been a terrible mistake, this coming of yours to England," said Mr. Strange, sorrowfully, drawing Alex to him. "You, as well as I, are in danger. And you have found a mother, who does not know of your existence, only to lose her. My poor little girl! Suppose we throw it all up and try to escape somewhere, anywhere?"

"I should be traced by Renaud. It is too late. There is no turning back, papa. None for me."

"Can you stay here and see your mother married to Lord Mountheron?" asked Mr. Strange, huskily.

"No, papa, I shall leave before that. I have been thinking how she used to love you. Dear papa, let me tell her your secret."

"Are you mad, Alex? Tell her I live, when, happily for her, she believes me dead? She loved me once, but she has recovered from the horror, shame and grief of my fate. Her mind is at rest about me. She believes me sleeping in a foreign grave, out of the reach of human injustice and wrong. To let her know I live would be to revive the agony of the past. She has buried me out of her sight; she has learned to love again. No, no, Alex; she must never know I live, unless my name can be cleared before all men."

"But if she knew, she would not marry Lord Mountheron. I do not believe she loves him as she loves you. And she is to be married to him next month, Mrs. Ingestre says."

"Next month," repeated Mr. Strange, hollowly. "Next month my name shall be cleared or I shall again be a wanderer on the face of

the earth. Probably the latter," he added, bitterly. Rest assured, my poor little Alex, I will never survive my capture—never! You shall be spared the horror of having your father hanged for a crime he never committed."

"Shall you go back to London, papa?" asked Alex. "I dare not let you go."

"I shall be safer there than elsewhere in England."

"Lord Kingscourt told me of a secret retreat under the altar of the ruined chapel at Mount Heron," said Alex. "He says no one in existence knows the secret of that hidden place; he said the secret perished with the murdered marquis and with Lord Stratford Heron. The present marquis does not know of it. Could you not take refuge in case of need?"

Mr. Strange started. "Perhaps," he answered. "I had forgotten that retreat. But the hour grows late. You will be missed. Is not that the sound of wheels?"

Alex listened. "And I cannot tell her our secret, papa?" "No, tell no one. I will see you again in the grounds of Mount Heron and hear your reports. Come, darling, let us hasten."

Alex gathered up her long dress and hurried by her father's side across the lawn in the direction of the mansion.

They were within sight of the drawing-room windows, and could see, also, the barouche drawn up in the port-cochère, and could hear the sound of hurrying steps, when they suddenly encountered a couple who came rapidly from the direction of the office, and who were evidently in search of the missing girl.

The couple were Felicie, Lady Vivian's tiring-woman, and Pierre Renaud, her lover, who had been spending the evening with her.

Alex had been missed, and Lady Vivian had forbidden to give a general alarm, but had despatched a footman to look for her about the grounds.

He had reported the young lady as not to be found, giving it as his opinion that she must have slipped among the rocks.

Mrs. Ingestre having taken leave, Alex's absence could no longer be concealed. A general search was instituted.

Lord Kingscourt ran to one portion of the rocks, Lord Mountheron to another, the servants scattered about the grounds, and in the midst of the general excitement, Alex, unconscious of it all, walked from her secluded nook straight into the hands of her enemy.

"Here is mademoiselle!" cried Felicie, joyously. "Oh, mademoiselle, we have been so frightened!"

"But whom have we here?" cried Pierre Renaud, flashing the light of a lantern upon Mr. Strange.

Alex breathed a prayer in Greek to her father to leave her.

As the glare of the lantern fell upon him Mr. Strange dashed it aside with his hand, before his enemy could behold his face, and rushed swiftly away into the shrubbery.

"Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Felicie. "A lover, mademoiselle!"

Pierre Renaud picked up his lantern, smiling grimly.

"It is the father!" he thought, with an exultant gleam of his evil eyes. "It is the fugitive Stratford Heron. Why did I not suspect that he would follow the girl to England? He has rushed straight into the enemy's camp. He cannot escape me now. All I have to do is to bag the game at my leisure."

CHAPTER XL.

PIERRE RENAUD made no attempt to pursue the fugitive, and he was careful not to betray his suspicions in regard to the identity of Alex's late companion.

He appeared to accept the exclamation of Felicie as sufficient explanation of Mr. Strange's presence in the grounds of Clyffe-bourne.

"It is a lover, Felicie," he said, with an odd

smile that showed all his teeth in the light of the recovered lantern. "Let us say nothing—we are lovers ourselves—is it not so?"

"My lady is very anxious. Let us hasten with mademoiselle to the house," cried Felicie. "Come, mademoiselle. You need not tremble so. As Pierre says, we are lovers ourselves. We need not speak of monsieur to everybody."

Alex did not speak, but moved on rapidly toward the dwelling.

She was met at the door by Lady Vivian and Mrs. Ingestre, who were in a state of the greatest alarm.

Lady Markham stood in the background, her sharp eyes peering out into the gloom.

"Here she comes!" she exclaimed, as Alex mounted the steps. "Miss Strange, you have frightened us nearly out of our senses. Where have you been?"

"Mademoiselle fell among the rocks," said Pierre Renaud, glibly. "She went out to listen to the sea, and lost her footing on the slippery cliff. It is a mercy she was not killed."

Neither Alex nor Felicie denied this false story.

To have denied it would have placed Alex in a worse dilemma than before.

Her pallor and the wet stains upon her delicate dress appeared to corroborate Renaud's affirmation, and no one but Lady Markham thought of doubting it.

Lady Vivian embraced the girl, and Mrs. Ingestre followed her example.

Lord Kingscourt and the marquis came up, and Pierre Renaud told anew a thrilling story of Alex's escape from death among the rocks.

Lady Vivian urged Alex to spend the night at Clyffe-bourne, but a glance at the sneering, sceptical countenance of Lady Markham fixed Alex's resolve for departure.

The girl knew that her enemy doubted Renaud's story.

She knew her own silence to be an apparent assent to it, and her cheeks burned and a great trouble and confusion possessed her.

"I must go, dear Lady Vivian," she said, shrinking as others of the guests came out into the hall. "Pray do not detain me. I am not at all hurt. I am perfectly well."

"We will take good care of her at Mount Heron, Lady Vivian," said Mrs. Ingestre. "You may safely trust Miss Strange to me. I will be very careful of her."

"Miss Strange must have her own way," declared Lady Vivian. "If she insists upon going, I will send in the morning to inquire after her. You know, Alex," she added, in an undertone, "that I would be glad to have you remain. After such an accident, you ought not to undertake so long a drive."

"I must go," repeated Alex.

Lady Vivian urged her no further. She accompanied Alex to the cloak-room, and assisted her to put on her hat and wraps, a signal mark of restored favour.

Alex's piteous look of misery at the last moment impelled the lady to take her in her arms and kiss her again and again.

"I will trust you, my dear," said her ladyship, referring to the mystery attending Mr. Strange's former visit. "You must come back to me next week, and go up to London with me."

She accompanied Alex to the door, and watched her enter the carriage, exhibiting a solicitude and affection that seriously angered Lady Markham.

The young Earl of Kingscourt assisted Alex into her place with a care and tenderness that touched her.

Even the marquis aroused himself from his melancholy and abstraction, and inquired after her injuries.

Alex sank back into her corner, and the barouche rolled on upon its return to Mount Heron.

The girl closed her eyes to avoid being questioned, but the earl, who held her hand the entire distance, knew that she was not asleep.

As they re-entered the great hall of the castle the young pair were left for a minute together,

Lord Mountheron passing on to the library, and Mrs. Ingestre proceeding to the drawing-room.

Then, for the first time, the young earl inquired how the accident had happened.

"I did not say that there had been an accident," said Alex, facing him bravely, her fearless eyes fixed upon him unflinchingly, while her complexion grew yet more pallid. "It was Pierre Renaud, the marquis's valet, who said that—not I."

"But was there no accident?"

"None whatever. Pierre Renaud and Felicie met me in the grounds on my way to the house. There—there was some one with me—the same person whom I saw at Clyffe-bourne before."

The young earl looked grave. The eyes that met his were honest, and they mirrored a truthful soul.

"I can't explain anything, Vane," continued the girl, her voice trembling. "I don't suppose you will trust me any longer."

"I do trust you, Alex: but I think you ought to confide in me, dear. You may be imposed upon by a scoundrel. Some chance acquaintance of your journey may be persecuting you. Your father is too far away to apply to for counsel. I beg you to trust in Lady Vivian or me. Think the matter over, dear, to-night, and believe that the advice of those who know the world better than you may relieve you of any annoyance you may have been called upon to endure."

Alex murmured good-night and ran up the stairs to her own room.

"By this time," she thought, "Lady Vivian has heard Felicie's story. Felicie would not tell her mistress a falsehood. And what must Lady Vivian think of me? As to Pierre Renaud, I tremble. He suspected the truth. I read the suspicion in his eyes. What will he do? And what is to become of papa?"

While she battled with her fears Lady Vivian was hearing the story from Felicie's lips.

To say that her ladyship was shocked would scarcely do justice to her state of mind on hearing the truth.

"A man with her?" she exclaimed. "And there was no accident whatever? Did she tell me an untruth, then?"

"No, my lady. It was Pierre Renaud told the untruth. Mademoiselle was quite silent. She would not tell what was wrong, poor young lady. And Pierre told the lie to save her being questioned, my lady. It would have been a bad thing for mademoiselle to have to own that she had met her lover in that fashion."

"Her lover," repeated Lady Vivian, thinking of the earl. "What was he like?"

"I could not see. Pierre raised the lantern to his face, and he dashed it from Pierre's hands to the ground. I saw only a beard, a black, full beard, my lady."

"Say nothing of this to anyone else, Felicie," said her mistress. "I want no gossiping upon the matter."

Felicie promised discretion, and brushed out her mistress's hair and attired her in her night-robe, then retiring to her own room, which was conveniently near at hand.

"Can I doubt that girl?" asked Lady Vivian of herself, walking to and fro in her room. "Impossible. She is pure and truthful as an angel. She is being imposed upon by some scoundrel. She is ignorant of the world and is afraid to tell me of her persecutions. I will see her and appeal to her to tell me the whole truth. I will be so gentle and tender with her that she will not be able to withhold her secret to me. I must and will know this mystery."

While Alex was giving way to her anxieties, while Lord Kingscourt was puzzling his brain for some solution to the affair of the evening, and while Lady Vivian walked her floor, troubled and unrestful, a scene was occurring in a chamber of Mount Heron Castle which would have thrown a glare of light upon the mystery of the Mount-heron tragedy.

CHAPTER XLI.

LORD MOUNTHERON had remained in the library after his return from Clyffebourne until nearly every member of the household had retired and the house was wrapped in silence.

Then he came forth and slowly and wearily ascended the stairs.

The great halls and corridors were dim and deserted.

The butler had a last round to make to extinguish lights and to secure doors and windows, but he was not yet visible. The marquis passed on, entering his own private room, adjoining his bed-chamber.

His lordship's suite was especially luxurious. He was a Sybarite in his tastes, loving warmth and beauty and splendour with a woman's keen appreciation.

His sitting-room overlooked the sea, and was carpeted with a thick crimson pile. His furniture was upholstered with crimson velvet relieved with gold.

His walls were exquisitely frescoed; wax lights burned on mantel-piece and tables. A sea-coal fire burned behind the polished bars of his grate; and a lounging-chair was drawn up before it in an inviting manner.

A pair of sliding-doors, now open, gave a view of the bed-room beyond, and of a large closet with a marble-bath, and of a dressing-room, the door of which was ajar.

Every appurtenance was on a princely scale of magnificence, yet the most refined taste had presided over the adornment and furnishing of these spacious apartments.

The marquis crossed the floor with noiseless step, raised the heavy curtains of crimson velvet embroidered with gold and lined with gold-coloured satin, and looked out upon the sea. All was gloom without.

He could not see the white-capped waves, but he could hear their surge and roar as they beat upon the rocks, and the sound seemed mournful and dreary to him to-night.

With a sigh he returned towards the hearth and flung himself in the easy chair before it.

He seemed to bask in the warmth and glow, which seemed the more delightful by contrast with the fierce wind that raged without.

He appeared wrapped in thoughts that were not pleasant, and did not hear his door open as his valet came in softly and with the peculiar stealthfulness that distinguished his movements.

Pierre Renaud was singularly cat-like. He regarded his master with an odd smile, and crept up behind him, bringing his hand down heavily upon his lordship's shoulder.

The marquis leapt to his feet in swift and uncontrollable terror, his face livid, his eyes starting.

He looked as if unable to take flight, but the mocking laugh of his servant brought an angry flush to his face and roused his temper.

"How dare you?" he ejaculated, hoarsely. "How dare you touch me, Pierre Renaud?"

The valet laughed again mockingly.

"Don't put on heroics to me," he scoffed. "It was a little familiarity, that was all. You'd better sit down and take it easy."

The marquis dropped back into his chair, trembling like a leaf.

"You are as nervous as a woman," remarked the valet, patronisingly. "I wonder you don't faint. Bah! I like to see a man have some nerve and sense and strength. I don't like these soft, die-away creatures."

The light that leapt to the marquis's eyes showed unexpected fierceness and anger.

"You dog!" he ejaculated. "If you give me any more of your insolence I'll discharge you! I've had enough of it! Day after day, month after month, year after year! I wonder I have borne it so long!"

The valet laughed again, insolently.

"I am polite enough before people, am I not?" he asked. "When people look on, I remember, always, that you are my lord, the great master I serve, and that I am only the dust under your feet. Is it not so?"

The marquis breathed a curse.

"But between ourselves," said the valet, "what need of ceremony? We are both human—one no better than the other—ha, ha! We are like two brothers. I am a Communist in principle; the low-born man, in my opinion, is the equal of the high-born master. As to your indignation you had better put it in your pocket. I shall not forget, in public, that I am servant and that you are master."

The marquis wiped his face with his pocket-handkerchief.

He made no further protestations, but bit his nether lip so fiercely in his attempt to restrain his passion that a drop of blood leaped to the surface.

He shaded his face with one hand, and sighed heavily.

All the softness and gentleness of his visage gave place to haggardness, hardness, and desperation.

The valet went softly about the room, busying himself with his duties.

Now and then, as he glanced at his master, that grim smile came back to his evil lips.

He brought the marquis's slippers and put them on his feet in place of his boots; he brought a dressing-gown, and the marquis arose and gave up his dress-coat in exchange; and Renaud then busied himself in the bed-room, presently returning, sleek and cat-like, and halted on the hearth-rug, looking gravely and steadily down upon his lordship.

"If you have gotten over your passion," said Renaud, seriously, "I have something to say to you."

The passion had died out of Lord Mountheron's visage, giving place to a hard and terrible melancholy.

He did not speak nor look up. A silence of some duration succeeded.

It was broken by the marquis, who asked in his usual mild and gentle voice:

"What did that affair at Clyffebourne mean, to-night?"

"What affair?"

"Miss Strange's 'accident' at Clyffebourne. The story you told was a lie, manufactured on the spur of the moment. I know you too well to be deceived by it. I noticed that the young lady did not confirm your statement. What was the secret of her long stay out-of-doors?"

"The story I told was a lie, as you saw; but I flatter myself that it was a neat invention, since it was gotten up 'on the spur of the moment,'" said Pierre Renaud. "The truth is, the young lady was on the lawn with a man, and I desired to shield her from hostile comment."

The marquis raised his head and arched his brows.

"Is that another falsehood?" he asked, drily.

"It's the truth. If Lady Vivian Clyffe or Mrs. Ingestre had been informed of it, Miss Strange would have been compelled to seek new quarters, to-night."

"You are very merciful, all of a sudden," mused the marquis.

"Merciful? Yes; but not to Miss Strange as much as to certain others I know. If the man had been discovered, to-night, and exposed, you, my lord, would scarcely have slept to-night!"

"Have you been drinking?" demanded the marquis.

"Have you any idea who this girl known as Alex Strange really is?" demanded the valet, abruptly.

"Why, yes. A Greek, or an English girl reared in Greece, who saved Lord Kingscourt and Bertie Knollys from mutilation by brigands at the risk of her own life! The earl has told me the whole story. She is a heroine!"

"Very good. Whose child is she?"

"Her father is a farmer in Greece, an impoverished Englishman. What difference does it make whose child she is? She's too far above you, Pierre Renaud, to have so much of your attention."

The valet paid no attention to this little sneer.

"I suppose you have noticed her hair," he said,

"of that peculiar tawny shade, brown with sunlight sifted on it?"

"You are poetical."

"And you must have noticed her eyes, blue as the famous Mountheron sapphires? Did you ever see such hair and eyes before? Less glorious, perhaps, but still similar."

The marquis started.

"You have noticed the resemblance, then?" said the valet.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Pierre Renaud, "bending forward, and hissing the name between his shut teeth, 'that this Alex Strange is Augusta, Marchioness of Mountheron.'"

The marquis looked turned to stone.

"And not only that," said Renaud, "but she knows her rank, and she has entered this castle under a false name for a secret and terrible purpose!"

(To be Continued.)

INDECISION OF CHARACTER.

Of the many cases which hinder men from attaining success indecision is, undoubtedly, one of the most potent. Without any determined course marked out for themselves, youth launch out into the great ocean of life, depending more upon chance than any fixed laws, whereby a definite result may be obtained.

Thinking to-day, perchance, to amass a fortune through some particular channel they, to-morrow, easily alter for some other. So they pass their lives, continually varying, always discontented with the present, and ever looking to the future for brighter days, which their indecision does not warrant them to expect.

How many young men there are who, if settled in their purpose of obtaining a livelihood, would ultimately be crowned with success.

How many old men who, if they had not so lightly, and so frequently, changed their avocation, would be now in the enjoyment of every comfort, whereas their latter days are embittered by want, and their home the workhouse.

It is the blight from which no one is exempt, that "man shall earn his own bread by the sweat of his brow."

Such being the case, let us not be over fastidious as to the nature of the employment. We were not placed in this world to enjoy an endless Paradise, but to prepare ourselves, by honest lives, for endless bliss.

If we feel dissatisfied with our lot—which, in fact, we all do—the king as well as the beggar—let us nobly and manfully endure it, and console ourselves with the pleasurable reflection that soon, very soon, all our toils and troubles and privations will have an end.

Let us try not to divest ourselves of the weight Providence has put upon us. Whatever our condition in life, let us discharge its duties, and if we calmly submit to the Creator's goodwill be convinced that our days will be more happy and less troubled than if we seek day after day an easier means of obtaining that from which we shall be shortly and eternally separated—money.

Be decided, then, in youth, what course you will pursue throughout life. Do not, without sufficient reason, deviate from it, and though you should not become a distinguished man, yet rest assured your life will not be fruitless.

THE proposal for a high school at Oxford has been confirmed, and at the meeting nearly £1,000 was subscribed.

FRAUDULENT DEBTORS. — A Bill "for the punishment of fraudulent debtors and for other purposes," introduced by the Lord Chancellor last August has been printed. It contains penalties for a bankrupt not making full disclosure of his affairs, not giving up all his property and all books and documents relating thereto, falsifying books or papers, absconding with property, fraudulently obtaining credit, making false claims, and other offences.



[HIS WIFE AND CHILD.]

THE EXPRESS TRAIN.

Two or three of us had lounged out of the club, one night, into Santley's office, to find out the news coming in by cable, which the sleeping town would not hear until the paper would be out to-morrow. Santley was editor of the "Courier."

He was scribbling away at driving speed, his hat on, an unlighted cigar in his mouth.

"You're at it late, Ben."

"Accident on a railway. Sixty lives lost," without looking up.

We seized the long white slips, which lay coiled over the table, and read the despatch.

"Tut, tut!"

"Infamous!"

"Nobody to blame, of course."

"I tell you the officers of a road, where such an accident is possible, should be tried for murder!" cried Ferrers.

Santley shoved his copy to a boy, and lighted his cigar.

"I think you're wrong, Ferrers. Instead of being startled at such casualties, I never travel on a railway, that I am not amazed at the security of them. Just think of it. Thousands of trains running yearly on each, with but a minute to spare between safety and destruction, the safety of these trains depending on conductors, telegraph clerks, brakemen, men of every grade of intellect, their brains subject to every kind of moods, and disease, and tempers.

"The engineer takes a glass of liquor; the conductor sets his watch half a minute too fast; the flagman falls asleep; and the train is dashed into ruin! It is not the accident that is to be wondered at; it is the escape that is miraculous!"

We all had dropped into seats, by this time. The night was young, and one after another told some story of adventure or danger. Presently, Santley said:

"There was an incident which occurred a few years ago which made me feel as I do in the matter. I happened to be an eye-witness to the whole affair."

"What was it, Ben?"

"It's rather a long story."

"No matter. Go on. You can't go home until your proof comes in, anyhow."

"No. Well, to make you understand, about five years ago, I had a bad break-down—night-work, hack, writing, and poor pay. You know how fast it all wears out the machine. The doctor talked of diseases of the grey matter of the brain, etc., and prescribed, instead of medicine, absolute rest and change of scene.

"I would have swallowed all the nostrums in a chemist's-shop rather than have left the office for a week.

"I'll take country board, and send in my editorials," I said.

"No; you must drop office and work utterly out of your life, for a month, at least. Talk and think of planting potatoes, or embroidery—anything but newspapers and politics."

"Well, I obeyed. I started on a pedestrian

tour; studied cattle in Norfolk, and ate sausages in Oxford. Finally, I brought up—foot-sore, and bored beyond heard hearing—in W—

"While there, I fell into the habit of lounging about the railway station, studying the construction of the engines, and making friends with the men.

"The man with whom I always fraternise, most readily, is the skilled mechanic. He has a degree of common sense—a store of certain facts, which your young doctor or politician is apt to lack.

"Besides, he is absolutely sure of his social standing ground, and has a grave self-respect, which teaches him to respect you.

"The professional lad, just started on his career, is uneasy, not sure of his position; he tries to climb perpetually. I tell you this, to explain my intimacy with many of the officials on the road, especially with an engineer named Blakeley.

"This man attracted me first by his ability to give me the information I wanted in a few direct, sharp words. Like most reticent men, he knew the weight and value of words. I soon became personally much interested in him. He was about forty, his hair streaked with grey, which hinted at a youth of hardships and much suffering.

"However, Blakeley had found his way to the uplands at last. Three years before, he had married a bright, cheerful woman. They had one child—a boy. He had work, and good wages, and was, I found, high in the confidence of the company.

"On one occasion, having a Sunday off, he took me up to where his boy lived. He was an exceptionally silent man, but when with them was garrulous and light-hearted as a boy. In his eyes, Jane was the wisest and fairest of women, and the boy a wonder of intellect. One great source of trouble to him was, as I found, that he was able to see them but once in three weeks.

"It was necessary for the child's health to keep them in the country air, and indeed, he could not afford to have them elsewhere; but this separated him from them almost wholly. Jane was in the habit of coming with Charley, down to a certain point of the road, every day, that Blakeley might see them as he dashed by.

"And when I found out this habit it occurred to me that I could give Blakeley a great pleasure. How often have I anathematised my meddling kindness since.

"January 25th was the child's birthday. I proposed to Mrs. Blakeley that she and Charley should get in the train which her husband drove, unknown to him, and run up to H—, where he had the night off.

"There was to be a little supper at the Rooms. Charley was to appear in a new suit, &c., &c. Of course, the whole affair was at my expense—a mere trifle, but an affair of grandeur and distinction which fairly took Jane's breath. She was a most innocent, happy creature; one of those women who are wives and mothers in the cradle.

"When Blakeley found her she was a thin, pale little tailor's machine to grind out badly-made coarse clothes. But three years of marriage and petting of Charley had made her rosy and plump and pretty.

"The little Highland suit was bought complete, to the tiny dirk and feather, and very pretty the little fellow looked in it. I wrote down to order a good supper to be ready at eight. Jane and the boy were to get in the train at a queer little hill village near which they lived.

"Blakeley ran the train from W— down to H— that day. His wife being in the train before he took charge of the engine, of course he would see and know nothing of her until we landed in H— at seven. I had intended to go down in the smoking compartment as usual, but another fancy, suggested, I suppose, by the originator of all evil, seized me.

"No need to laugh. Satan, I believe, has quite as much to do with accidents and misery and death as with sin. Why not? However, my fancy, diabolic or not, was to go down on the engine with Blakeley. I hunted up the fireman, and talked to him for an hour. Then I went to the engineer.

"Blakeley," I said, "Jones (the fireman) wants to-night off."

"Off! Oh, no doubt! He's taking to drink, Jones. He must have been drinking when he talked of that. It's impossible."

"I explained to Blakeley that Jones had a sick wife, or a sweetheart, or something, and finally owned that I had an unconquerable desire to run down the road on the engine, and, that knowing my only chance was to take the fireman's place, had bribed him to give it to me. The fact was, that in my idleness, and the over-worked state of my brain, I craved excitement as a confirmed drunkard does liquor.

"Blakeley, I saw, was angry, and exceedingly annoyed.

"He refused, at first, but finally gave way with a grave civility, which almost made me ashamed of my boyish whim. I promised to be the prince of firemen.

"Then you'll have to be treated as one, Mr. Santley," said Blakeley, curtly. "I can't talk to gentlemen aboard my engine. It's different from here, on the platform, you'll remember. I've got to order and to obey in there, and that's all there's of it."

"Oh, I understand!" I said, thinking that it required little moral effort to obey in the matter of shovelling coal. If I could have guessed what that shovelling coal was to cost me. But all day I went about thinking of the fiery ride through the hills, mounted literally on the iron horse.

"It was in the middle of the afternoon when the train rushed into the station. I caught a glimpse of Jane in the train with Charley, magnificent in his red and green plaid, beside her.

"She nodded a dozen times, and laughed, and then hid behind the window, fearing her husband would see her.

"Poor girl! It was the second great holiday of her life, she had told me; the first being her wedding-day.

"The train stopped ten minutes. It was neither an express nor an accommodation train, but one which stopped at the principal stations on the route.

"I had an old patched suit on, fit, as I supposed, for the service of coal-heaving; but Blakeley, when I came up, eyed it and my hands sardonically. He was in no better temper, evidently, with amateur firemen than he had been in the morning.

"All a-board!" he said, gruffly. "You take your place there, Mr. Santley. You'll put in coal just as I call for it, if you please, and not trust to your own judgment."

"His tone annoyed me.

"It cannot require much judgment to keep up a fire under a boiling pot, and not make it too hot. Any woman can do that in her own kitchen."

"He made no reply, but took his place in the little square box, where the greater part of his life was passed.

"I noticed that his face was flushed; and his irritation at my foolish whim was sure more than the occasion required. I watched him with keen curiosity, wondering if it was possible that he could have been drinking, as he had accused poor Jones of doing."

"It strikes me as odd," interrupted Ferrers, "that you should have not only made an intimate companion of this fellow, Santley, but have taken so keen an interest in his tempers and drinking bouts. You would not be likely to honour any of us with such attention."

"No. I have something else to do. I was absolutely idle then. Blakeley and his family, for the time, made up my world. As for the friendship, this was an exceptional man, both as to integrity and massive hard sense. The knowledge that comes from books counts with me but for little compared with the education given by

experience and contact with facts for forty years.

"I was honoured by the friendship of this grimy engineer. But the question of his sobriety, that day, was a serious one.

"A man in charge of a train, with hundreds of passengers, I felt, ought to be sober, particularly when I was shut up in the engine with him.

"Just as we started a slip of paper was handed to him, which he read and threw down.

"Do you run this train by telegraph?" I asked, beginning to shovel vigorously.

"Yes. No more coal."

"Isn't that unusual?"

"Yes. There are two special trains on the road this afternoon."

"Is it difficult to run a train by telegraph?" I said, presently, simply to make conversation.

"Staring in silence at the narrow slit in the gloomy furnace, or out at the village street, through which we slowly passed, was monotonous.

"No, not difficult. I simply have to obey the instructions which I receive at each station."

"But if you should happen to think the instructions not right?"

"Happen to think! I've no business to think at all! When the trains run by telegraph the engineers are so many machines in the hands of one controller, who directs them all from a central point. He has the whole road under his eye. If they don't obey to the least tittle their orders it is destruction to the whole."

"You seem to think silent obedience the first and last merit in a railway man?"

"Yes, drily.

"I took the hint, and was dumb.

"We were out of town now. Blakeley quickened the speed of the engine. I did not speak to him again. There was little for me to do, and I was occupied in looking out at the flying landscape.

"The fields were covered with a deep fall of snow, and glanced whitely by, with a strange, unreal shimmer. The air was keen and cutting. Still the ride was tame. I was disappointed. The excitement would by no means equal a dash on a spirited horse. I began to think I had little to pay for my grimy hands and face, when we slowed at the next station.

"One or two passengers got in the train. There was the inevitable old lady, with bundles, alighting, and the usual squabble about her trunk. I was craning my neck to hear when a boy ran alongside with a telegram.

"The next moment I heard a smothered exclamation from Blakeley.

"Go back," he said to the boy. "Tell Sands to have the message repeated. There's a mistake."

"The boy dashed off, and Blakeley sat, waiting, coolly polishing a bit of the shining brass before him. Back came the boy.

"Had it repeated. Sands is raging at you. Says there's no mistake, and you'd best get on," thrusting the second message up.

"Blakeley read it, and stood hesitating for half a minute. I never shall forget the dismay, the utter perplexity that gathered in his lean face as he looked at the telegram and then at the long train behind him. His lips moved as if he were calculating chances, and his eye suddenly quailed, as if he saw death at the end of the calculation.

"What's the matter? What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Obey."

"The engine gave a long shriek of horror that made me start, as if it were Blakeley's own voice. The next instant we rushed out of the station and dashed through the low-lying farms, at a speed which seemed dangerous to me.

"Put in more coal," said Blakeley.

"I shovelled it in.

"We are going very fast, Blakeley," I ventured.

"He did not answer. His eye was fixed on the steam gauge; his lips closely shut.

"More coal."

"I threw it in.

"The fields and houses began to fly past but half seen. We were nearing S—. Blakeley's eyes went from the gauge to the face of the time-piece and back. He moved like an automaton. There was little more meaning in his face.

"More!" without turning his eye.

"I took up the shovel—hesitated.

"Blakeley! We're going very fast. We're going at the rate of sixty miles an hour."

"Coal."

"I was alarmed at the stern, cold rigidity of the man. His pallor was becoming frightful.

"I threw in the coal.

"At least, we must stop at S—. He had told me that was next half."

"The little town approached. As the first house came into view the engine sent out its shriek of warning; it grew louder, louder. We dashed into the street, up to the station, where a group of passengers waited, and passed it without the halt of an instant. I caught a glimpse of the appalled faces of the waiting crowd. Then we were in the fields again.

"The speed now became literally breathless; the furnace glared red-hot. The heat, the velocity, the terrible nervous strain of the man beside me, seemed to weigh the air. I found myself drawing long stertorous breaths, like one drowning. I heaped in the coals at intervals, as he bade me."

"I'd have done nothing of the kind!" interrupted one of the listeners. "The man was mad."

"I did it because I was oppressed by an odd sense of duty, which I never had in my ordinary brain-work."

"I had taken this mechanical task on myself, and I felt a stricture upon me to go through with it at any cost."

"I know now how it is that dull, ignorant men, without a spark of enthusiasm, show such heroism sometimes, as soldiers, engineers, captains of wrecked vessels. It is this overpowering sense of routine duty. It's a finer thing than sheer bravery, to my notion."

"However, I began to be of your mind, Wright, that Blakeley was mad, labouring under some sudden frenzy from drink, though I had never seen him touch liquor."

"He did not move hand or foot, except in the mechanical control of the engine, his eye going from the gauge to the time-piece with a steadiness that was more terrible and threatening than any gleam of insanity would have been."

"Once he glanced back at the long train sweeping after the engine with a headlong speed that rocked it from side to side. You could catch glimpses of hundreds of men and women talking, reading, smoking, unconscious that their lives were all in the hold of one man, whom I now strongly suspected to be mad."

"I knew by his look that he remembered their lives were in his hand. He glanced at the clock."

"Twenty miles," he muttered. "Throw on the coal, Jones. The fire is going out."

"I did it. Yes, I did it. There was something in the face of that man that I could not resist. Then I climbed forward and shook him by the shoulder."

"Blakeley," I shouted, "you are running this train into the jaws of death."

"I know it," quietly.

"Your wife and child are in it."

"Great Heaven!"

"He staggered to his feet. But even then he did not move his eye from the gauge."

"In a minute—"

"Make up the fire," he said, and pushed in the throttle valve.

"I will not."

"Make up the fire, Mr. Santley," very quietly.

"I will not. You may murder yourself, and your wife and boy, but you shall not murder me."

"He looked at me. His kindly grey eyes glared like those of a wild beast. But he controlled himself in a moment."

"I could throw you off the engine and make short work of it. But—look here; do you see the station yonder?"

"I saw a thin wisp of smoke against the sky, about five miles in advance.

"I was told to reach that station by six o'clock. The express train meeting us is due now. I ought to have laid by for it at S—. I was told to come on. The track is a single one. Unless I can make the siding at that station in three minutes we will meet it yonder in the hollow."

"Somebody blundered?"

"Yes, I think so."

"And you obeyed?"

"He said nothing. I threw on coal. If I had had petroleum I would have thrown it on. But I never was calmer in my life. When Death has a man actually by the throat, it sobers him."

"Blakeley pushed in the valve still farther. The engine began to give a strange panting sound. Far off to the south I could see the bituminous black smoke of a train."

"I looked at Blakeley inquiringly. He nodded. It was the express."

"I stooped to the fire."

"No more," he said.

"I looked across the clear, wintry sky, at the grey smoke of the peaceful little village, and beyond, that black line coming closer, closer, across the sky. Then I turned to the watch."

"In one minute more—"

"Gentlemen, I confess: I sat down, and buried my face in my hands. I don't think I tried to pray. I had a confused thought of a mass of mangled, dying men and women, mothers and their babies, and, vaguely, of a merciful Maker. Little Charley with his curls and pretty suit—"

"There was a terrific shriek from the engine, against which I leaned. Another in my face. A hot tempest swept past me."

"I looked up. We were on the siding, and the express had gone by. The hindmost carriages touched in passing."

"Thank Heaven! You've done it, Blakeley! Blakeley! I cried."

"But he did not speak. He sat there, immovable, and cold as a stone. I went to the carriage, and brought Jane and the boy to him, and when he opened his eyes and took the little woman's hands in his I came away."

"An engineer named Fred, who was at the station, ran the train into H—. Blakeley was terribly shaken. But we went down, and had our little feast, after all. Charley, at least, enjoyed it."

"What was the explanation? A blunder of the director, or the telegraph operator?"

"I don't know. Blakeley made light of it afterwards, and kept the secret. These railway men must have a strong esprit de corps."

"All I know is, that Blakeley's salary was raised soon after and he received, that Christmas, a very handsome 'testimonial for services rendered' from the company." A. S. L.

OLD-FASHIONED DOUBLE-BARRELLED GUNS.

DOUBLE-BARRELLED guns were originally made with one barrel lying over the other, but that was before percussion caps came into use. Each barrel of the early double gun had a separate pan for the touch-powder, and a separate hammer and hammer-spring, but one cock only for both. These guns were actually revolvers, and turned round on a common centre, where the breech joined the stock. They were worked by a spring, near where the actions of breechloading guns are now operated. As soon as one barrel was discharged, the shooter pressed the spring with one hand, and turned the barrels with the other, until the loaded chamber was brought into position, when the pressure was taken off the spring, which descended into a notch and held the barrel into its place.

The locks of these guns are said to have been exceedingly complex, but still this does not seem to deter the more ardent of our sporting

predecessors from still further complicating the matter by adding three or four barrels to one stock. The next step towards improvement was to have the two barrels one over the other, but not revolving, each having its separate lock and trigger.

A second shot with this gun was very readily obtained, but the low position of the lower barrel had to be taken into consideration, and the aim elevated accordingly. The next step was placing the barrels side by side, as with the modern gun.

FACETIÆ.

HIPPOPHAGY.

A FRENCH society intends shortly to open an establishment in London for the sale of horse-flesh as an article of food. The Lord Mayor was asked for his official permission, and the Mayor did not say neigh to the horse. —Fun.

A STUDY OF FAITH.

OLD LADY (meditating): "Doctor, says I, the measure was rather short last time, I says; 'scuse my mentionin', but the old man's very bad.' So he smiles, and like a dear, blest if he don't give me a hextry supply in a bran noo bottle." —Judy.

REGULATION STAGE COSTUME.

THE authorities of the War Office have been greatly scandalised at the conduct of an actor in the "Sorcerer," who not only had the audacity to personate an officer of the Guards, but positively wore the uniform of such an officer absolutely correct in every detail. As no Act of Parliament could be found which would enable the Lord Chamberlain to interfere, and to insist that people shall appear in costumes which they don't wear, that useful official has, we understand, with a view to the guidance of actors for the future, kindly issued a few regulations. These are samples:

For an Archbishop—Lawn sleeves and a gown are admissible, but yellow, blue, scarlet or Scotch plaid is recommended for the colour of the latter. Silk stockings and gaiters to be replaced by worsted and shooting boots.

For an Officer in the Army—Trousers of any fancy pattern. Scarlet tunic and yellow sash. Chimney pot hat indispensable.

For a Policeman—Glengarry cap. Corduroys and blue swallow tail coat. Oilskin cap may be worn.

Clerk in the War Office, Admiralty, or any branch of the Civil Service—Coat in the fashion of 1830. White duck trousers and top-boots. Cuffs and collars of the present period not objected to.

For a Judge—Gown of a striped pattern. Colour immaterial. Pigtail and collar à la Christy. Wig dyed sky-blue or sap-green.

For the Lord Chamberlain—The upper part of the costume can be adapted from that of a pantomimic clown. The lower nankeen breeches and top-boots in the style of Paul Pry.

The instructions add:

"If these hints be adhered to, no offence will be given to the individuals intended to be personated." —Funny Folks.

WAITING.

A YOUNG man went into a barber's shop, the other day, and demanded a shave. The tonsorial artist submerged his customer's countenance in a bed of lather, and then went to the window, sat down, and began reading a newspaper.

Fifteen minutes passed by.

"Here," demanded the impatient man in a big chair, "why ain't you shaving me? What in thunder are you doing?"

Calmly spoke the barber, not looking up from his paper.

"Waitin' foh de beard to grow, sah."

And then a white-faced unshaven man rose up and leaned over the washbasin, while a cautious barber arose and went hastily out into the country to look for Christmas.

A GOOD EXCUSE.

THE other day a gentleman was travelling in Scotland. Presently the train came to a standstill.

After a delay of ten minutes the traveller put out his head and said:

"What are you waiting here for, guard?"

"Aweel, man, and we're jist waiting for the injin," was the laconic reply.

HOW TO TREAT A REFUSER.

(Scene: After a short frolic from cover to cover.)

FRIEND (who has given Mossoo a mount): "Hello, old fellow, what in the world have you done with the mare?"

Mossoo (thinking he has done a clever thing): "Ah, ze brute; she had not ze courage to charge ze obstacles vis me, so I come on and leave her to find a vay for herself." —Judy.

NOTHING.

I've been in the habit of writing for years,

And people my works are polite about;

They say from my verses it plainly appears

I always have something to write about.

In writing of something, though, merit is small—

Good subjects engender facility—

And so I tried writing of nothing at all

To prove my transcendent ability.

I started away with a confident trust
Of earning remarks eulogistical;
(Though writing of nothing's an action that must

Appear, in the main, egotistical;)

But soon the conviction invaded my mind

That fame, I should never be earning it,

For "nothing at all" is my theme, and I find

I've nothing to mention concerning it! —Fun.

ANECDOTES.

A MEDICAL student being called upon to replace the palisades he had destroyed, replied that it would not be Christian to render railing for railing.

A man of easy temper having been pushed into a vinegar vat, philosophically remarked that he had only had an acidulated drop. —Fun.

A MISTAKE.

HE ran somewhat hastily into a cigar shop and said, pompously:

"Give me one of your best Matilda cigars."

"I suppose you mean a Manila?" said the assistant.

"Oh, yes!" he said. "I was thinking of another girl."

THE experienced editor can always tell at first sight the man who comes in with his first attempt at original poetry. He walks on tip-toe, and looks as though he had just passed some counterfeit money or brought the baby.

NEVER REFUSED.

THIS is given as the first honeymoon discussion between an American lawyer and a New York belle:

"No, Amy, you're quite wrong. I never was refused in all my life."

"Oh, Tom, how can you say so? Why, there was Louie Simpson."

"I tell you again you're wrong—completely wrong. It's true I was 'declined with thanks' once, but I never was refused."

THE FIRST ULSTER.

DONIZETTI was really the inventor of the ulster.

One day, at Paris, he sent for his tailor to measure him for an overcoat.

The tailor found him at the piano, surrendering himself to the rapture of composition.

Nevertheless he was persuaded to quit the beloved instrument and deliver himself up to the man of tape and chalk. The tailor made the first measurements, then stooping, began to take the length of garment.

"To the knee, sir?" he said timidly.

"Lower, lower," said the composer, in a dreamy voice.

The tailor brought the measure half-way down the leg, and paused inquiringly.

"Lower, lower."

"The tailor reached the composer's ankles."

"Lower, lower."

"But, sir, you won't be able to walk."

"Walk? Walk? Who wants to walk? Hang it, sir—with an ecstatic lifting of the arms—"I never walk—I soar!"

A CORRESPONDENT writes to ask if "the Flour of Dunblane was best whites?" But it is of no consequence. —Judgy.

KEEPING THE DUST OUT.

A MOTHER seeing her little girl nearly asleep in her chair, asked if she had not better go to bed.

"Oh, no, mamma; I only shut my eyes to keep the dust out."

A GRACER in Washington advertises that he has "whiskey for sale that has been drank by all the Presidents, from General Jackson down to the present time."

THE following is given as a specimen of the conversation of two Chicago young men:

"Do you abbreviate?"

"Why, cert. Don't you?"

"Bet. I think it's splendid, don't you?"

"Magnif."

"Going to hear Schurz's lec.?"

"No, he's on Hayse's cab and won't lec. here?"

"Is that pos.?"

"Dead cert."

"Well, it makes no diff. to me, I wasn't going."

A STRANGER seeing an Irishman leaning against a post, watching a funeral procession coming out of a brick house at his side, spoke to him, when the following dialogue ensued:

"Is that a funeral?"

"Yes, sir; I'm thinking it is."

"Anybody of distinction?"

"I reckon it is, sir."

"Who is that has died?"

"The gentleman in the coffin, sir."

"Did I not give you a flogging the other day?" asked a schoolmaster of a trembling boy.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy.

"Well, what do the Scriptures say upon the subject?"

"I don't know, sir," said the boy, "except it is that part which says, 'It's more blessed to give than to receive.'"

ON DIT.

MR. GLADSTONE, with his friend Mr. Tennyson, paid a visit to the Talking Oak, and inquired its age. "Oh, don't axe me!" replied the oak. —Fun.

STATISTICS.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.—A Report has been issued by the Chief Registrar of the Friendly, Industrial, and Provident Societies and Trades Unions for the year ending December 31, 1876. The total number of returns received for England and Wales was 11,282, the total number of members 8,404,187, and the total amount of funds £9,336,948. The Report says:—"Twenty-two societies returned over 10,000 members each, and of these 9 returned over 30,000, the largest number being returned by the Royal Liver Friendly Society, Liverpool—viz., 682,371 members. The aggregate membership of the whole 22 societies amounts to 1,478,765, leaving 1,925,422 in all the 11,260 other societies, making an average of close upon 171 members each. From this it will be seen how small the bulk of our Friendly Societies

really are in point of membership. If we turn to the amount of funds and adopt the same figures we shall find very different results. Fifty-eight societies return more than £10,000 each, or together £2,283,346, representing not much more than a quarter of the total, and leaving £7,053,602 for the remaining 11,224 societies, or say £628 nearly each.

PRESS ON.

"WHAT chance for me to enter here
Where thousands throng the
portals?"

Of sob and sigh, with longing eye,
Heart-sick, despairing mortals;
And ever, as the crowds push on,
With eager impulse burning,
Upon the verge they, trembling,
surge
Half-terrified, but yearning,
When one bold push might conquer
fate,
Though lions guard the charmed
gate.

But few deserve where all desire
Fame's incense as it rises,
And few attain where many strain
To clutch the higher prizes;
But only nerve and heart can win,
And that by stern insistence,
For coy Success ne'er yields to stress
Of wooing at a distance.
Press on: resolved, whate'er you do,
To be among the foremost few.

What though the markets overflow,
Good wares will brightest figure,
And minds and hearts, in social marts,
Are tested by their vigour.
While Caution weighs and Fear
assays

The cost of gain to win it,
He lowest brings the scale who flings
His sword and buckler in it.
Press on! The strong, the steadfast
stroke
Alone can bow the stubborn oak.

Scorn second place, where first and
best
Is possible, but ever,
Though forced beneath, for proudest
wreath

Strive on with fresh endeavour;
Life is a steep whose slippery sides
Must oft defeat and tire;
Stick as you climb, and every time
You change a foot go higher.
Press on! The world's acclaims but
greet
The rising forms and upward feet.

"There's aye a chance to enter in
Where others have found places!"
Your motto be, while in the sea
Of struggling forms and faces.
Press on! Success is doubly barred
To summons feebly sounded,
While blow on blow at last lay's low
The walls by which she's bounded.
Press on! The strong in heart and
soul
Alone will reach the shining goal. N. U.

GEMS.

TO-MORROW is like a juggler that deceives us, a quack that pretends to cure us, and thin ice that will not bear our weight. It is a fruit beyond our grasp; a glittering bubble that bursts and vanishes away; a will-o'-the-wisp that leads many into the mire, and a rock that many mariners have struck and suffered shipwreck. It is an illusion to all who neglect the present hour, and a reality to those only who improve to-day.

THE slowest advances to greatness are the most certain. Swift rises are often attended with precipitate falls; and what is soon got ends generally short in the possession.

MODESTY in a young female is the flower of a tender shrub, which is the promise of an excellent fruit. To destroy it, is to destroy the fruitful germ of a thousand virtues, to destroy the bright hope of society, to commit an outrage against nature.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A GOOD WAY TO COOK CHICKENS.—Take three or four chickens, and, after cleaning and washing them well in cold water, split them down the back, break the breast bone and unjoint the wings to make them lie down better; put them in a large bread-pan and sprinkle pepper, salt and flour over them, put a large lump of fresh butter on each chicken, pour boiling water in the pan and set it in the oven. Let them cook till very tender and a rich brown colour; then take out on a large platter, put on more butter, set in the oven to keep warm; put some sweet cream in the pan, and add as much hot water as you think necessary for the quantity of gravy you desire, the more cream and the less water the better the gravy. Thicken with flour; put a pint of the gravy on the chickens. They must be put on the table very hot.

OYSTER PIE.—Line a buttered pudding-dish with rich crust of puff paste; then fill it with crusts of bread or light crackers; butter well the edges of your dish; cover this mock pie with a thick crust, making the edges very heavy, and bake; stew the oysters; beat into them at the last two eggs, and thicken with cracker crumbs; stew only five minutes, and have them and the pie done at the same time; lift up the top crust, pour in the hot oysters; serve very hot.

JELLY CAKE.—One cupful sugar and a lump of butter the size of an egg—creamed; three eggs, the whites and yolks beaten separately; one cupful sifted flour, one teaspoonful cream tartar sifted in the flour, one-half teaspoonful soda dissolved in one tablespoonful milk; bake in jelly cake tins; when cold, spread jelly between the layers. If the edges are uneven trim them smooth with a sharp knife.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Sicilians will present Garibaldi with a shield, on which are inscribed the names of his sixty-one battles, as well as that of Anita, his heroic wife, which is engraven on an oak crown.

LORD BEACONSFIELD has shown the greatest consideration to the family of the late Dr. Rimbault, the eminent musician and antiquary, by allowing his children to receive the grant from the Civil List, which Lord Beaconsfield had intended to give to their mother. The letter to the mother, acquainting her of that intention, arrived at her house the day after her death.

A CLUB FOR WOMEN.—A project for instituting a social club for women in the neighbourhood of Bryanston Square, Marylebone, has been successfully carried out, and the institution, which is to afford opportunities of social intercourse and a pleasant home to those engaged in business during the day—more especially young women—is to be called the Seymour Club, its home being at 132, Seymour Place, near the Edgware Road. The provisional rules state that all members must be more than sixteen years of age, and that the Club will be open on Sundays from ten a.m. till ten p.m., on Saturdays from two p.m. to ten p.m., and on other days from six p.m. to ten p.m.

THE following love-couplet is pretty and simple:

"I looked and loved, and loved and looked,
and looked and loved again;
But looked and loved, and loved and looked,
and looked and loved in vain."—Mark Twain

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. A. B.—It is not competent for you to make any assignment of your property in the way suggested while you are in difficulties. Obviously such an arrangement would be held to be fraudulent. While perfectly solvent a man may, with certain necessary formalities, make over property to another, but not when creditors have a lien upon it.

Q. Q. M.—Our opinion is not favourable to such establishments.

EMILY C.—No charge is made.

VIOLET.—If each has had reasonably frequent opportunities of associating with and judging of the other during the time we think that four months' courtship might be sufficient—other circumstances being favourable.

A. CONSTANT READER.—Your claim as elder brother is not affected in the least either by the fact that you are married or by the circumstance that your residence has been for a long while remote from the property in question. Unless disinherited by will you can of course obtain your share, let your brothers say what they will to the contrary.

MALAY.—You will find what you want on reference to the Post Office London Directory.

J. E. H.—Any bookseller should be able to tell you.

MARY ROYAL.—The Navy List will supply you with full particulars.

BRIDGET B.—We have at present more matter than we can conveniently make use of.

NIMROD.—Colour of hair medium brown. We do not know that beer is injurious to the hair. Writing not good—practice carefully.

KATE A.—Hair brown, of fine texture. Writing fairly good.

BOB.—Declined with thanks.

SATCY JULIA.—For the meaning of Mizpah open the Bible at the thirty-first chapter of Genesis and read verses 44 to 54. For instance, 48 and 49 run as follows: And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galed. [That is a witness.] "And Mizpah" [that is a beacon, or watch-tower]; "for he said, 'The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another.'" The modern application of the word requires no further explanation. The letters "I.H.S." are the initials of Latin words meaning Jesus, the Saviour of Mankind.

S. J. L.—To make Everton toffee mix a pound of brown sugar with a pound of fresh butter and heat it in a saucepan for fifteen or twenty minutes, until "a little of it dropped into cold water forms a lump that breaks crisply." Then pour into a buttered tin mould.

J. D.—Pitman's system of shorthand seems to be the most in favour. You can get instruction books from Paternoster Row and elsewhere. Odell's (Taylor's) is much more easily acquired, but has not the capabilities of Pitman's, which requires a great deal of study and practice. Lewis's system is also a very good one, books of which can be got in the Strand.

JULIAN M.—The legality of the marriage would not be affected by the length of time the contracting parties were members of the Roman Catholic body; but there seems to have been some serious informality in the ceremony which would we think render it invalid. Neither licence nor banns nor registrar's certificate nor competent witnesses appear to have been employed. At the same time you do not deserve to be free, seeing that you went through the ceremony believing it to be illegal. Consult a solicitor.

AUREA.—1. & 2. Black spots on the face are to be treated by making an emulsion of bitter almonds and dissolving in every half-pint two grains of corrosive sublimate; and, after softening the cuticle by bathing the face for a few minutes with warm water, applying the emulsion so prepared before going to bed, letting the lotion dry into the skin and washing well off in the morning. At the same time a wineglassful of wormwood tea should be taken every day, either two or three times. 3. We cannot tell you how to make your arms and neck "more plump." Live regularly and temperately, take plenty of exercise, cultivate a cheerful temper, and perhaps you may eventually come to be satisfied with the disposition of adipose matter which Nature has designed for you. 4. About four weeks before they appear, in consequence of large circulation and consequent necessity of preparing in advance. 5. No charge is made.

D. D., a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty.

PROFUSO, nineteen, medium height, fond of music, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

NELLIE, seventeen, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young man between twenty and twenty-five, tall, dark, good-looking.

M. S. S., twenty-two, tall, light hair, blue eyes, loving, would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be about twenty-four, tall, loving.

SARAH JANE, KATE, and JANE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Sarah Jane is twenty, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, fair. Kate is twenty-one, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home. Jane is eighteen, light brown hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-six, tall.

B. E. G. would like to correspond with a young lady. Must be tall, dark.

P. B. and S. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. P. B. is sixteen, brown hair and eyes, medium height, good-looking. S. B. is seventeen, dark, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about seventeen.

L. D. M., twenty-eight, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a lady with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be of loving dispositions and fond of home.

SAM and ROBERT, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Sam is twenty-three, medium height, light hair and eyes. Robert is twenty-four, dark hair and eyes, good-tempered, medium height, good-looking.

AT THE CASSEMENT.

She pines at her cottage casement long
At eve by the glooming sea,
While her white lips move in a droning
Song

To the restless child on her knee.
"Rest thee, little one, rest, my dearie,
Father cannot be far;
The waves are wild and the winds are
dreary,
But a light's at the outer bar."

Av, a tremulous light, that rises and falls
Beyond the steadfast glare
Which the light-house flings from its
rock-built walls,
But is it a ship-light there?

"Rest, my little one, rest, my baby,
Father will come at last;
The lantern rises and dips, and maybe
It swings from the Nancy's mast."

But the tossing beam is no longer there,
And naught but the light-house now
Reveals the depths of the empty air
From the headland's sable brow.
"Rest, my precious, the light is only
Behind the harbour hill;
Father will come to his home so lonely—
Ah, beating heart, be still!"

A rocket furrows the blue-black dome,
And again, inside the bar,
The ship-light dances along the gloom
Where the smacks at anchor are.
"Rest, my dearie, I almost fancy
The sound of his voice I hear:
Is it the light from the dear old Nancy
That draws in the harbour near?"

A heavy plunge in the wave below,
And the flash of a straining ear—
A hurrying step on the crustal snow,
And a knock at the cottage-door.
"Wake, my little one, wake, my dearie!
Out of night and the trackless sea,
The star hath risen ere hope grew weary,
And father is come to thee." N. D. U.

LIZZIE and NELLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Lizzie is dark, and of a loving disposition. Nellie is thoroughly domesticated, fond of home.

X. Y. Z. (an artist), twenty-three, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

J. B., B. B. S., two friends, wish to correspond with two young ladies. J. B. is twenty-three, medium height, fair. B. B. S. is tall, dark.

PIVOTING BAR, DROP BOLT, and FRONT FLAP, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Pivoting Bar is twenty-four, brown hair, blue eyes. Drop Bolt is twenty-three, light hair, hazel eyes. Front Flap is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes. Respondents must be fond of home and children.

LIME LIGHT and TRUE BLUE, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Lime Light is twenty-four, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children. True Blue is twenty-two, fond of home and music.

ROBERT, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady. Must be about eighteen.

EVERETT and CLARA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Everett is twenty-one, fond of music, hazel eyes, thoroughly domesticated, fair. Clara is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes, good-tempered, medium height, and dark.

EMMA and ETHEL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Emma is twenty-one, dark, fond of music domesticated. Ethel is nineteen, tall, fond of children.

HELENE and GERDA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Helene is twenty-one, fond of home and music. Gerda is eighteen, fond of home.

N. L. and D. F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. N. L. is nineteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes. D. F. is twenty, medium height, dark hair, tall, fond of home.

LEOPOLD, nineteen, fair, medium height, curly hair, blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a dark young lady, fond of dancing.

JERRY L., a seaman in the Royal Navy, nineteen, tall, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen with a view to matrimony, tall.

FLORRY and MARY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Florry is twenty-five, medium height, fond of home. Mary is twenty-three, handsome.

E. S. and C. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two ladies. E. S. is twenty-two, hazel eyes, tall, fond of home. C. L. is twenty-three, medium height, blue eyes, good-looking, fair.

EMILY, twenty, brown hair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-two.

ADA, twenty-six, dark, of a loving disposition, dark hair, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be about thirty, fond of home and children, brown hair, brown eyes.

D. P. and W. F., two friends, wish to correspond with two ladies. D. P. is twenty-two, dark hair, grey eyes, fond of home and children, good-looking. W. F. C. is twenty-one, of a loving disposition, fair, dark hair, blue eyes.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LONG TOM is responded to by—Grey-Eyed Corsican Sister, thoroughly domesticated, and of a loving disposition.

LONGER TOM by—Blue-Eyed Corsican Sister, fond of home, loving.

LONGEST TOM by—Brown-Eyed Corsican Sister, loving, fond of home.

C. G. by—H. P., twenty.

LAURA by—Alexander T., twenty-two, dark hair and eyes.

MYRTLE by—Scotus, twenty-four, good-looking, loving, steady.

B. F. by—A. P., eighteen, tall.

M. F. by—Minnie, nineteen, dark hair and eyes, and of medium height.

C. D. by—Marie, twenty.

CLARE by—P. D., nineteen, good-looking, fond of home and music.

FOLLY by—H. K., twenty, tall, good-looking, fair.

JAMES E. by—Lottie, sixteen, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of music.

RON ROT by—Snowdrop, sixteen, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of music.

K. L. by—H. P., seventeen, dark.

F. M. by—Violet, twenty, brown hair and eyes, good-looking.

WILLIAM by—Annie, tall, dark hair and eyes, fond of music.

CLARA by—Verdadero Amo, fair.

L. S. D. by—Mina S., twenty-one, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

E. S. by—Bertha S. W., medium height, fair, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

W. J. by—Eveline, twenty-one, fair, of a loving disposition.

D. F. by—Muriel, twenty, medium height, blue eyes, good-looking.

LILY by—J. S., nineteen, tall, fair.

W. R. by—Jennie, medium height, considered good-looking.

S. C. by—Alice, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.